

**‘Will you walk into our parlour?’:
The rise of leagues and their impact on the governance of
women's hockey in England 1895-1939**

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Abstract

One of the main aims of this thesis is to supplement and further develop the very sparse body of academic work on hockey, and on women's hockey in particular. Despite being the premier team game for women and girls in England for much of the 20th century – as well as popular with men – the sport has been under-researched by historians.

Another aim is to explore how the concept of amateurism influenced, and was moulded by, a team sport played by women. Much has been written about the ethos within British sport, but mostly in relation to men's athletic pursuits. The AEWHAs unique position as the first sport governing body in England to be run exclusively by women allows this thesis to redress the balance and offer a female-centric view of amateurism.

By focusing on an aspect of hockey in England that has not been explored before – the emergence of women's league competitions and their impact on the governance of the sport up to World War Two – this thesis makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the philosophy. It chronicles the foundation of the Lancashire and District Ladies' Hockey League (LHL) in 1910 and the reaction to this competition of the All England Women's Hockey Association (AEWHA), which banned its members from taking part in leagues or playing for cups. The uneasy and constantly evolving relationship between those who wished to uphold these amateur ideals and those who wished to compete for points and prizes will be examined over three decades up to 1939.

This thesis will posit that – in common with many other sport governing bodies – the AEWhA's interest in, and attitude towards, leagues and amateurism changed according to its own particular needs. Unlike any other (male-run) governing body, however, its sustained resistance to competitive hockey was less to do with class differences and increasingly to do with a desire to prevent male administrators from being involved in women's hockey.

In support of this overarching narrative, this thesis will take a fresh look at the origins of the AEWhA, and a first look at the emergence of a rival governing body for women's hockey in England – the English Ladies' Hockey Leagues Association (ELHLA). New biographical information about many of the members and early administrators of both organisations will be revealed, in support of another aim of this work: to give a profile to women who played a significant role in the history of sport. As well their athletic achievements, this thesis will touch upon hockey players' involvement in the war effort from 1914-1918, and their support for the campaign for women's suffrage. It will also examine the interconnections between women's and men's hockey, both nationally and internationally.

As an amateur team game of significance to both sexes, hockey is well placed to inform the debates on gender and class in sport – but, surprisingly, it has attracted very little attention from academics. It is hoped that the wealth of new information in this thesis, and the fresh perspective it offers on amateurism, will prompt further research into hockey's history and the lives of the women and men who played it.

List of abbreviations

AEWHA - All England Women's Hockey Association

AENA – All England Netball Association

AFA – Amateur Football Association

BFUW – British Federation of University Women

BLFC – British Ladies Football Club

BoT – Board of Trade

ELHLA – English Ladies Hockey Leagues Association

EWCF – English Women's Cricket Federation

FA – Football Association

FIH – Fédération Internationale de Hockey

FSU – Forward Suffrage Union

HA – Hockey Association

IFUW – International Federation of University Women

IFWHA – International Federation of Women's Hockey Associations

IHU – Irish Hockey Union

ILHU – Irish Ladies Hockey Union

IOC – International Olympic Committee

IRB – International Rules Board

LHA – Ladies Hockey Association

LHL – Lancashire and Cheshire Ladies Hockey League

LMH – Lady Margaret Hall

MCC- Marylebone Cricket Club

MDA – Manchester District Association

MDTCPS – Manchester Day Training College Past Students

NHU – National Hockey Union

NPFA – National Playing Fields Association

NRFU – Northern Rugby Football Union

NUWSS – National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies

ODNB – Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

QMAAC – Queen Mary Army Auxiliary Corps

RFU – Rugby Football Union

THM – The Hockey Museum

ULAU – University of London Athletic Union

UoBA – University of Bath Archive

VAD – Voluntary aid detachment

WAAC – Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps

WCA – Women’s Cricket Association

WLF – Women’s Liberal Federation

WRNS – Women’s Royal Naval Service

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Introduction: 'Happily without a history'

In attempting to explain hockey's rising popularity at the start of the 20th century, particularly among women, a regional newspaper reporter declared: 'It has been said of hockey that it is happily without a history.'¹ The implication was that, unlike football – with its professional leagues and partisan supporters – or cricket, with its batting averages and record stands, hockey was simply an ephemeral amusement for those who wanted nothing more than fresh air, vigorous exercise and some team camaraderie. While sides would play to win, the results of matches or the form of individual players retained little significance after the final whistle; teams simply moved on to the next game, the slate wiped clean. Consequently, in the late Victorian period, hockey became popular with men who wanted to play games for play's sake and with a new generation of women who simply wanted to be allowed to play games. 'A good deal of its growth... may be traced to the fact that it has won many recruits from the football field,' reported the *Norfolk News*, before adding: 'As an [sic] evidence of the growth of athleticism among women, it may be mentioned that there are numerically more women's than men's clubs. Certain it is that no outdoor game has claimed the attention of both men and women more surely during the last 10 years.'²

This in itself marked hockey out from the norm: a physically demanding, skilful team game that wider society in early 20th century England accepted could be played by both sexes. Despite this shared athletic experience,

¹ Hockey: Norfolk v Cambridgeshire, *Norfolk News*, 4 February 1905, 7

² *ibid*

however, men and women did not unite to encourage the sport's development. The men's Hockey Association (HA), formed in 1886, turned down a request from the All England Women's Hockey Association (AEWHA) – founded nine years later – to affiliate to it. This left the women to organise their own affairs and, as a result, the AEWHA became the first sport governing body in England to be run exclusively by women, for women and girls. This, and women's successful appropriation of the game, only adds to hockey's curiosity quotient. While it continued to claim the attention of both sexes in England during the 20th century, hockey came to be regarded as a sport played primarily by females – thanks in no small part to the efforts of the AEWHA.

The intelligent, well-educated, independent-minded and largely independently wealthy women of the AEWHA proved to be adroit administrators and ardent advocates of female self-governance. With most areas of public life closed to them, these late-Victorian women revelled in the opportunities that hockey presented. The game was socially as well as physically liberating, offering a rare opportunity to channel their energy and enthusiasm in a team environment, and to create personal networks beyond the home and family. It also helped the women develop expertise – in the game itself and in its organisation and administration. Hockey was a form of self-expression for early players, Kathleen McCrone points out – 'a symbol of the larger game they were playing in the arena of social change'.³ This may, in part, explain why it gained such momentum among undergraduates and schoolgirls in the late 19th century, and why it gradually came to be regarded

³ Kathleen E McCrone, *Playing the game: sport and the physical emancipation of English women 1870-1914* (University Press of Kentucky, Lexington 1988), 137

as a 'female sport'. In 1905, however, both the HA and the AEWHHA were being credited with turning this 'keen and vigorous pastime... into a game of considerable importance'.⁴ The inference was that hockey's growing popularity was altering its very nature; that the mere creation of governing bodies had introduced the potential for the sport to acquire 'a history' – for it to change from being a pleasant form of inconsequential exercise into something that could be recorded, analysed, quantified, commercialised – and, maybe even, professionalised. It is a characterisation that neither the HA nor the AEWHHA would have recognised or agreed with; both organisations spent much of the 20th century trying to broaden the reach and appeal of their sport while also preserving its amateur integrity. As Lincoln Allison details in his defence and analysis of amateurism in sport, however, there was no simple way of defining an amateur.⁵

Hockey and amateurism

The philosophy of amateurism developed in England during the 19th century, and its tenets could vary from sport to sport, often moulded by governing bodies to suit their particular circumstances.⁶ They were concerned variously with a person's social status; not being paid to play or making any kind of personal gain; competing solely for the pleasure of it; and behaving in a sporting manner – that is, fairly, honestly and with respect for your opponent.⁷ True amateurs, it was said, could also play several sports well and with style,

⁴ Hockey: Norfolk v Cambridgeshire, *Norfolk News*, 4 February 1905, 7

⁵ Lincoln Allison, *Amateurism in sport* (Frank Cass, London 2001), 17-32

⁶ See John Hargreaves, *Sport, power and culture: a social and historical analysis of popular sports in Britain* (Polity Press, Cambridge 1986); Dilwyn Porter and Stephen Wagg, *Amateurism in British sport: it matters not who won or lost?* (Routledge, London 2007)

⁷ Lincoln Allison, *Amateurism in sport* (Frank Cass, London 2001), 17-32

without giving the impression of trying too hard.⁸ Initially, the upper classes were the only ones with the time and money to cultivate such insouciant expertise, often through a devotion to practise that might be considered contrary to the spirit of amateurism. As a result, the terms 'amateur' and 'gentlemen' came to be regarded as synonymous, although their conflation was a one-way street. 'The facts of him being civil and never having competed for money are not sufficient to make a man a gentleman as well as an amateur', wrote a correspondent to *The Saturday Review* in 1867.⁹ Conversely, the fact of earning money from sport was frequently not sufficient to make a gentleman a professional – the most famous example being cricketer Dr W G Grace. Despite playing as an 'amateur' for Gloucestershire and England, the larger-than-life physician is calculated to have 'made a minimum of £30,000 a year out of domestic cricket in today's terms during the 1870s'.¹⁰

Such 'shamateurism', as it came to be known, was tolerated while most athletes were drawn from the same socio-economic pool – or the classes could be allocated defined roles and easily kept apart, as in cricket.¹¹ In sports that required physical contact or head-to-head competition, however, the question of whether someone was paid to play acquired greater significance towards the end of the 19th century. This is because working-class men – having gained more leisure time and disposable income thanks to employment law and factory reforms – began to involve themselves in games, both as players and as spectators. Particularly talented athletes would even be compensated

⁸ Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: a modern history* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1992), 100

⁹ Neil Wigglesworth, *The evolution of English sport*, (Routledge, London 2004), 89

¹⁰ Simon Rae, *W G Grace: a life*, London 1998

¹¹ Dennis Brailsford, *British sport: a social history* (The Lutterworth Press, Cambridge 1997), 98

by their clubs for lost wages if they had to take time off work to play or train – so-called broken-time payments – while others received 'expenses' or were remunerated in kind.¹² With the time and the means to train properly, they began to challenge the on-pitch dominance of middle-class athletes, who did not relish the prospect of being beaten by social inferiors at what they considered to be their own games. Mixing socially with working-class men was also undesirable, so many sports governing bodies sought to restrict the participation of the lower classes.

The Amateur Athletic Club and the Amateur Rowing Association simply banned manual labourers from taking part in their competitions. In other sports, however, not being paid to play was elevated to *the* defining characteristic of an amateur sportsperson, in an effort 'to keep leisured and working-class participants apart and to ensure that such contact as did occur was so circumscribed that it could not be presented as a challenge to the southern-based patrician hegemony'.¹³ As a result, rugby split into two codes in 1895 – league (working class, northern, 'professional') and union (upper/middle class, largely southern-based, 'amateur'). The Football Association (FA), meanwhile, was forced to accept the formation of a professional Football League, made up, initially, of working-class clubs from the North and Midlands, although these clubs were owned by middle-class men.¹⁴ Such separations and distinctions had little to do with preserving the

¹² Derek Birley, *Sport and the making of Britain* (Manchester University Press, Manchester 1993), 272-273

¹³ Dilwyn Porter, 'Revenge of the Crouch End Vampires: the AFA, the FA and English football's 'Great Split', 1907-14', *Sport in History* 26:3 (December 2006), 408

¹⁴ Tony Collins, *Rugby's Great Split; class, culture and the origins of rugby league football* (Routledge, Abingdon 2006); Matt Taylor, *The Leaguers: the making of professional football in England 1900-1939* (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool 2005)

amateur ideal handed down by the alumni of England's public schools, claims Tony Collins; instead, they had all to do with 'how the middle classes controlling the game[s] should respond to the growth of working-class participation'.¹⁵

It was not a situation that hockey had to confront; the sport had neither the commercial profile nor levels of working-class participation to make payments to players an issue. To try to ensure such precursors of professionalism never crept into their sport, however, the HA and the AEWHHA banned their members from playing for cups or championships – a stance that, again, differentiated hockey from most other team sports for much of the 20th century. Footballers, whether they were paid to play or not, challenged for points and prizes under the auspices of the FA, while cricket's gentleman 'amateurs' and professional 'players' competed all season for county championship glory. Even the Rugby Football Union (RFU) – whose club members, like hockey players, took part only in friendly matches week in week out – sanctioned a county championship, while the Calcutta Cup was fought over in the annual international between England and Scotland. In the eyes of the AEWHHA and the HA, however, leagues and silverware engendered excessive levels of competitiveness among teams, who might then be tempted to adopt 'professional' methods to achieve victory, including paying players. So they pursued a form of amateurism that went beyond the mere financial – although there was little formal cooperation between the governing bodies on maintaining and enforcing their opposition to leagues and trophies. Indeed, as

¹⁵ Tony Collins, *Rugby's road to 1895*, *Sporting Heritage* 1:1 (1996)

this thesis will show, the AEWHHA did not follow the men's lead on this matter and, initially, allowed its affiliates to play for silverware.

From the outset, then, the women's governing body showed itself to be single-minded. While it adopted the same playing rules as the men and 'refused to curtail women's behaviour' – a move that Marilyn Constanzo says differentiated hockey players from many of their athletic contemporaries, who 'acquiesced to modified rules, shortened field lengths and shorter [time] periods' – the AEWHHA did not follow the HA slavishly.¹⁶ Fairly soon after its foundation, it began introducing amendments to the playing rules that would be credited with turning hockey into a more free-flowing, skilful game, amendments that the HA would (much) later take on board. In this way, women not only proved themselves capable of mastering a major team game played by men, but also of leading the way when it came to the sport's development – and aspects of the convergence and divergence of the women's and men's games will be touched upon in this study.

Such particularities of hockey – an amateur team game of significance to both men and women, as well as 'an important site of feminist intervention' spanning the entire 20th century – mean it is well placed to inform the debates on gender and class in sport history.¹⁷ Until recently, however, it can be said to have been unhappily without a historiography, largely ignored by sport academics, as well as by wider social and cultural historians. One of the main aims of this thesis, therefore, is simply to add to the very sparse body of work that currently exists on hockey.

¹⁶ Marilyn Constanzo, 'One can't shake off the women': images of sport and gender in *Punch* 1901-10, *International Journal of the History of Sport* 19:1 (March 2002), 37

¹⁷ McCrone, *Playing the game*, 276

Hockey and other team games

Much has been written about amateurism in British sport, but mostly in relation to men's athletic pursuits: cricket's brazen separation of team-mates into 'gentlemen' and 'players'; rugby's split into 'league' and 'union'; and the FA's pragmatic acceptance of a professional league.¹⁸ The history of the AEWHA spans, almost exactly, the final two epochs of Lincoln Allison's chronology of amateurism in British and Olympic sport, which includes: The Establishment of Amateurism, 1863-95; Amateur Hegemony, 1895-1961; and The Decline of Amateurism, 1961-95. He also makes no mention of women, however, as his timeline traverses the formation of the FA in 1863 and the professionalisation of rugby union in 1995.¹⁹ Women's exclusion from these sports for much of the 20th century means that historians and others have rarely considered how the amateur ethos manifested itself in team games played by females, one exception being this author's 2017 journal article *'Thus far and no farther': the rise of women's hockey leagues in England from 1910 to 1939*.²⁰ In the decades leading up to World War Two, 'team games played by women' meant hockey, predominantly.

The sport had gained momentum among schoolgirls and university students in the late 19th century, as successive generations grasped the educational opportunities hard won by their mothers and aunts. With its emphasis on good teamwork to achieve a collective goal, the 'somewhat rougher game' of hockey may have felt like a better fit for pioneering, boundary-pushing females than the more genteel, socially acceptable and

¹⁸ See Porter and Wagg, *Amateurism in British sport*

¹⁹ Allison, *Amateurism in sport*, 165-170

²⁰ Jo Halpin, 'Thus far and no farther': the rise of women's hockey leagues in England from 1910 to 1939, *Sport in History* 37:2 (2017), 146-163

largely individual pursuits of tennis, golf or croquet.²¹ Undoubtedly, though, hockey's early popularity was also helped by the lack of alternative winter team games for women; at the turn of the 20th century, those who desired the type of sporting camaraderie and keen competition so readily available to their brothers were really limited to the hockey pitch.

Football and rugby were the predominant winter pursuits of games-playing British men, but these sports were largely off limits to females. A thriving football scene did develop for women during World War One, when works and munitions teams – such as Dick, Kerr Ladies – took part in fundraising and morale-boosting matches, attracting crowds of up to 55,000. In peacetime, however, the desirability of women playing a traditionally 'masculine' sport came under scrutiny once more. In 1921, the FA banned its affiliated clubs from allowing females to play on their pitches, effectively curtailing the expansion of women's football in the country for the next 50 years.²² Social disapprobation was enough to limit women's playing involvement in rugby (both union and league) until the latter decades of the 20th century, but objections to them taking up hockey were relatively short-lived. Despite apocalyptic pronouncements by eugenicist doctors such as Arabella Kenealy, who warned of women neutering themselves by over-indulging in athletics, the public debate on the suitability of the sport for females had become largely academic by the turn of the 20th century.²³ The

²¹ The world of women, *Bury and Norwich Post*, 20 March 1900, 2

²² Jean Williams, *A contemporary history of women's sport, part one: sporting women 1850-1960* (Routledge, Abingdon 2016), 123. Some tournament-style fixtures, and cup and charity games did continue after the ban, and certain clubs kept going for decades. But there was no sustained, collective resistance or opposition to the FA's action. See Jean Williams, *A game for rough girls: a history of women's football in Britain* (Routledge, London 2003)

²³ Sheila Fletcher, *Women first: the female tradition in English physical education 1880-1980* (The Athlone Press, London 1984), 25-26

Brighton Gazette hinted at the general acceptance, or indifference, to females playing hockey after witnessing 'thousands of women' at the England v Ireland international in Richmond Park in 1901 – a scene it described as 'one of the most remarkable in the annals of female sport'. 'Some say the doctors shake their heads at the athletic woman,' it reported, 'others declare that the modern up-to-date girl is unfitting herself to become a mother; yet others think it better that she should be out at play than sitting indoors sipping champagne and reading "shilling shockers".'²⁴

Victorian girls' lack of opportunity for physical exercise had been highlighted by the 1864 Taunton Commission, with Commissioner Daniel Fearon reporting that they needed games 'which shall be sufficiently violent to exercise thoroughly their bodies and sufficiently difficult to thoroughly divert their minds'. Hockey emerged as that 'sufficiently violent' game for girls and women, and appears to have been accepted as such by society relatively quickly.²⁵ For every sensationalist newspaper headline about the defeminising, family-wrecking, posture-ruining effects of hockey, there were (often less trumpeted) comments about the virtues of women taking vigorous exercise in the fresh air – not to mention a plethora of relatively neutral, work-a-day match reports. Importantly, there was no real objection to female participation from male hockey players. In 1896, for example, honorary secretary of the HA Stanley Christopherson was reported as saying he saw 'no reason why women should not play [the game] for exercise', although he did suggest they use a lighter stick and ball.²⁶ It is not a view that members of

²⁴ Talk in town, *Brighton Gazette*, 14 March 1901, 5. Shilling shockers were cheap, paperback mass-market novels of crime or violence that were popular in the Victorian period

²⁵ Fletcher, *Women first*, 14

²⁶ Daily notes, *Yorkshire Herald*, 10 January 1896, 4

the FA, RFU or cricket's governing body, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), would have espoused about their sports at this time.

Acceptance of women playing hockey may have been helped by the fact that the sport was regarded as less 'manly' than football and rugby. According to *The Liverpool Echo*'s correspondent, the game was 'applicable to boys who have neither the physique nor inclination to play in the more robust codes'.²⁷ As a result, mixed, social hockey became a popular variant of the game from the mid-1890s, despite the disapproval of both the AEWH and HA, which believed it detracted from the playing experience of both sexes.²⁸ Netball and lacrosse were also acceptably 'feminine' team sports, but they never managed to eclipse the popularity of hockey – possibly because of their slightly later arrival on the English sporting scene. Lacrosse was introduced to schools such as Cheltenham Ladies College and Brighton-based Roedean during the 1880s and '90s, but the first women's club was not formed until 1905.²⁹ Students at Martina Bergman Österberg's physical training college in Hampstead, meanwhile, were the first to try out 'basket ball' (as netball was then known) in 1895.³⁰ By contrast, the first women's hockey teams emerged in the mid-1880s, after the sport had gained a solid foothold among the upper middle-class females to whom secondary and tertiary education had been extended in the preceding two decades. Privately educated schoolgirls took their love of hockey with them to university, and it was from the colleges of

²⁷ G N Osborne, Hockey for the schoolboy, *Liverpool Echo*, 6 October 1934, 7

²⁸ Shinobu Akimoto, *A very serious part of hockey: mixed hockey in England before 1914*, unpublished Master's thesis, De Montfort University, 2012

²⁹ Levick papers reference MS102, Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections, University of Birmingham, December 2012

³⁰ Jane Claydon, *Netball* (Dartford 1968), www.bergmanosterbergunion.org.uk – accessed: 29 December 2018

Cambridge, Oxford and London that the AEWHHA emerged – 17 years before the Ladies Lacrosse Association (1912) and more than 30 years before the All England Netball Association (1926). As a consequence of being 'first to market', as it were, hockey engendered an enthusiasm among turn-of-the-century women that was said to be 'akin to a devotion'.³¹

Whether played by men or women, however, hockey in Britain did not attract the popular following that might have turned it into a successful commercial enterprise. Unlike the largely single-sex sports of cricket, rugby and football – which divided along class lines as they wrestled with the vagaries of amateurism – payments to working players never became a major issue within hockey, although its adherents were every bit as class conscious. The game's equitable appeal to men and women, however, introduced a very obvious biological division – and, in England, hockey split along gender lines from the start, when the HA declared, in 1895, that it could not recognise the newly established AEWHHA.³² This parting of the ways would have profound implications for the development of hockey over the next 100 years, both domestically and internationally – and no more so than when it came to upholding its particular interpretation of amateurism.

The AEWHHA, leagues and men

Like most sport governing bodies, the HA and the AEWHHA were dogged by the question 'What is an amateur?' – and, in the early decades of the Edwardian period, both came under pressure to allow hockey leagues to be

³¹ Hockey: Norfolk v Cambridgeshire, *Norfolk News*, 4 February 1905, 7

³² Minutes of HA committee meeting, 22 November 1895, The Hockey Museum Archive

formed and trophies to be presented. The first serious challenge to the AEWHAs 'non-competitive' stance came in 1910, when the Lancashire and Cheshire Ladies Hockey League (LHL) was formed, to be quickly followed by similar competitions in cities and towns across the north and midlands of England. Over the next two decades, the governing body struggled to define its relationship with these leagues, as it fought to maintain its amateur ideals while seeking to represent all women's hockey in England. This balancing act would prove to be impossible, and a rival authority – the English Ladies Hockey Leagues Association (ELHLA) – emerged. Unlike in other team sports, however, this parting of the ways was not fuelled by class-based arguments over professional players, but ultimately – this thesis will show – by the AEWHAs determination to remain a women-only governing body. For while it was sincere in its philosophical opposition to competitions, the AEWHAs had another reason for not wanting to admit leagues to its ranks: male executive officers.

Many early competitions for women, including the LHL, were set up by men, who also played a major role in their ongoing administration. This was unacceptable to the AEWHAs, which – having been self-governing since 1895 – permitted only women to sit on its executive body and those of associations affiliated to it. Any accommodation of leagues would have meant accepting men in positions of power, which introduced the risk of losing control of their sport. Initially, the leagues and their male administrators were kept at arm's length by the AEWHAs policy of not allowing its affiliates to play for points or prizes. As the governing body came under increasing pressure to recognise these competitions, however – particularly after World War One, when it

needed to rebuild its numerical strength – a change of tack was needed. It allowed leagues to affiliate, but only under stringent conditions, which were tightened even further after the AEWHHA turned its attention to international affairs from the mid-1920s. The English governing body was instrumental in the founding of the International Federation of Women's Hockey Associations (IFWHA) in 1927 and was regarded as the lead authority within it. Some continental European women's associations – by dint of being sub-sections of men's national governing bodies – were already affiliated to the male-led *Fédération Internationale de Hockey* (FIH), set up three years earlier. The AEWHHA, however, does not appear to have considered trying to link up with the FIH as an alternative to creating a separate women's organisation. This may have been because the primary objective of the FIH was to lobby for men's hockey to be included in the Olympic Games – a competition that the English, in general, had come to regard as anathema to amateur sporting ideals.³³

Even so, by the mid-1920s the AEWHHA had shown itself willing to compromise on the issue of medals and trophies domestically, so this thesis will contend that the governing body's refusal to seek an alliance with the FIH was more about maintaining control of the women's game as it widened its sphere of influence. The international federation it brought into being would admit only women-run organisations – and this, more than differing attitudes towards cups and competitions, would be an enduring buffer against overtures from the FIH to amalgamate. In the run-up to the IFWHA being launched, the

³³ Matthew P Llewellyn, The curse of the shamateur, *International Journal of the History of Sport* 28:5 (April 2011), 796-816

AEWHA Council – perhaps anticipating scrutiny from continental associations with mixed administrations – restated its ban on men holding executive positions within its affiliated associations, and gave leagues two years to replace their male officers with women. An exodus of such organisations followed, leading to the formation of the ELHLA – a split in the sport primarily prompted by gender differences, rather than class-based concerns over amateur ideals.

Literature review

This division within hockey and the emergence of the ELHLA are not mentioned in the very slim body of work upon which 'women's sport history has remained largely dependent'³⁴. For the most part, this does not venture beyond an AEWHA-oriented view of the sport, and the upper-middle class women for and by whom the governing body was set up. From Kathleen McCrone's seminal text *Playing the Game: Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women 1870-1914* (1988) to Jean Williams' more recent *A Contemporary History of Women's Sport: Part One* (2014), the focus of much of the current literature is largely on hockey players' negotiation of Victorian ideas of propriety as the sport grew in popularity during the late-19th century. Williams' survey of sporting women from 1850 to 1960 does seek to broaden the narrative, but still in relation to privileged members of the AEWHA.

³⁴ Carol Osborne and Fiona Skillen, The state of play: women in British sport history, *Sport in History* 30:2 (2010), 190. These works include: McCrone, *Playing the game*; Fletcher, *Women first*; Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting females: critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports* (Routledge, London 1994); J A Mangan and Roberta Park (eds), *From 'fair sex' to feminism: sport and the socialisation of women in the industrial and post-industrial eras* (Routledge, Abingdon 1987); and Catriona Parratt, *More than mere amusement: working-class women's leisure in England 1750-1914* (Northeastern University Press, Boston 2001)

She uses personal items – such as players' scrapbooks – to illustrate the significance of the game in women's everyday lives, and the social networks that grew from this. She also explores the individuals and the mechanisms through which the game was spread from England around the world and suggests potential new ways in which historians can advance the limited debate about women's place in sporting culture.³⁵ It's a debate with which very few social, cultural or sport historians – male or female – have sought to engage, and the reasons given for this disinterest are many, if not that varied.

Carol Osborne and Fiona Skillen have highlighted that the 'sport history constituency... remains predominantly populated by male scholars and, therefore, is still underpinned by a body of research that broadly speaks to male interests'.³⁶ It's an explanation that male academics are willing to acknowledge. In *Sport and the British*, for example, Richard Holt declares that 'the history of sport in modern Britain is a history of men' and he says 'women figure only fleetingly in [his] study ... because sport has been so thoroughly identified with masculinity'.³⁷ Tony Collins, meanwhile, claims exploring the role sport has played for women is difficult because 'modern sport was consciously established to be an exclusively male practice from the start'.³⁸ So if women feature in general sport history texts at all, they are often segregated off into a chapter, or a subsection of a chapter – and this tendency to reinforce

³⁵ Williams, *A contemporary history of women's sport*, 154-72

³⁶ Osborne and Skillen, *The state of play*, 190

³⁷ Holt, *Sport and the British*, 8

³⁸ Tony Collins, Work, rest and play: recent trends in the history of sport and leisure, *Journal of Contemporary History* 42:2 (2007), 409

sport 'as male unless otherwise stated' is also evident in wider social and cultural histories.³⁹

While Dilwyn Porter claims few historians 'would now survey any period of modern British history with sport "left out"', this still largely means sport as played by men.⁴⁰ There is scant recognition of its importance to female lives, although some – such as Ross McKibbin – do consider 'the relationship of women to sport'.⁴¹ In this way, female participation is presented as the anomaly that must be looked at in isolation from, but always in relation to, the 'given' – that is, male participation.⁴²

Disappointingly, women's experience of sport is treated equally as peripherally by female social and cultural historians. The strong hockey-playing ethos among women at King's College, London – promoted by its principal, and the AEWH's first president, Lilian Faithfull – is highlighted by Carol Dyhouse in her examination of women's experiences at British universities before 1939. She quotes Edith Morley as insisting that 'it was the hockey club that really cemented friendships in the Women's Department and created a strong sense of belonging to a corporate body'.⁴³ Despite such accounts of the centrality of sport to girls' and women's personal development, however, few social historians explore it in any detail as a means of sustaining or expanding female social and professional networks. Even Dyhouse, in summarising the significance of 'feminine subcultures' to women's

³⁹ Martin Polley, *Moving the goalposts: a history of sport and society since 1945* (Routledge, London 1998), 105

⁴⁰ Dilwyn Porter, Sports history and modern British history, in *Sport in History* 31:2 (June 2011), 182

⁴¹ Ross McKibbin, *Classes and cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1998), 333

⁴² Mike Huggins and Jack Williams, *Sport and the English 1918-1939*, (Routledge, Abingdon 2006), 10

⁴³ Carol Dyhouse, *No distinction of sex? Women in British universities 1870-1939* (UCL Press, London 1995), 204

development, focuses very much on non-physical activities – such as debates, discussions and presentations held in 'private houses, halls of residence, teashops, or women's common rooms'⁴⁴ – rather than sport.

Joyce Kay has observed that 'perhaps it was right and proper in the early development of women's history that leisure should be overlooked in favour of topics crucial to female advancement in the public sphere: politics, law, education, paid employment and philanthropy'.⁴⁵ This, however, is to ignore the potential role of sport in underpinning such advancement by helping create, strengthen and sustain the social networks – as well as the physical and mental attributes – necessary for it to take place. Rightly or wrongly, sport has been credited – by the likes of Charles Kingsley, Pierre de Coubertin and, allegedly, the Duke of Wellington⁴⁶ – with instilling the character traits necessary for young men to succeed in other areas of their lives. It is said to impart 'not merely daring and endurance, but... temper, self-restraint, fairness, honour, unenvious approbation of another's success, and all that "give and take" of life which stand a man in good stead when he goes forth into the world'.⁴⁷ Such links are rarely made in relation to successful females. J A Mangan and Roberta Park's collection of essays does look at sport's role in the socialisation of women, but mainly in relation to how physical activity was

⁴⁴ *ibid*, 228

⁴⁵ Joyce Kay, 'No time for recreation till the vote is won'? Suffrage activists and leisure in Edwardian Britain, *Women's History Review* 16:4 (2007), 535-553

⁴⁶ See Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and sport* (Hambledon and London, London 2004) and John J MacAloon, *This great symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the origins of the modern Olympic Games* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 1981). That the Duke of Wellington said 'the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton' is apocryphal, but Kevin Waite argues that England's Georgian elite did value sport in public schools as a means of producing vigorous future leaders of the country – Kevin Waite, Beating Napoleon at Eton: violence, sport and manliness in England's public schools 1783-1815, *Cultural and Social History* 11:3 (2004), 407-424

⁴⁷ Holt, *Sport and the British*, 93

negotiated and controlled to perpetuate female subordination, rather than promote female emancipation and progression.⁴⁸ The importance of sporting networks to women who rose to prominence in other fields warrants its own research project, but this thesis will begin to uncover some of the interconnections between hockey players and female advancement in the broader public sphere.

Osborne and Skillen claim a 'flimsy' explanation for the absence of such analysis in the current literature is that 'sport is considered so integral to male culture ... that historians of women do not regard it as their concern'. However, this type of reasoning, they argue, 'overlooks the point that no realm of social or cultural life is exclusively the property of any given group, but is merely appropriated and in turn constructed as such'.⁴⁹ Ironically, the success of women in appropriating hockey as a 'female' team sport may also explain why the predominantly male sport history constituency has largely ignored the game. The sport has been useful to historians for illustrating broader points about the development of female education, dress reform, medical concerns over exercise for women, or societal disapproval of their athleticism, but very few have considered it worthy of attention in its own right.

Beyond Britain's shores, Geoff Watson has examined the sporting, cultural and social legacy for New Zealand women's sport of the English hockey team's inaugural tour to the country in 1914.⁵⁰ Academic and sports journalist Boria Majumdar, meanwhile, has written about the 'glory years' of

⁴⁸ Mangan and Park, *From 'fair sex' to feminism*

⁴⁹ Osborne and Skillen, *The state of play*, 190

⁵⁰ Geoff Watson, 'See these brilliant exponents of the game': the England women's hockey team tour of Australia and New Zealand, 1914, *International Journal of the History of Sport* 33:17 (2016), 2,105-2,122

Indian men's hockey in the first half of the 20th century, when the country won six consecutive Olympic gold medals between 1928 and 1956.⁵¹ The Olympics are also the focus of a 2018 article by Akhtar Nawaz and Rob Hess, who use Pakistan's performance in field hockey at the Games as a prism through which to assess the country's participation in, and development of, elite sport.⁵² The emergence of women's hockey in the Galicia region of Spain in the 1930s has been explored by Cristina López-Villar, who examines the role that clubs and other activities related to hockey played in female socialisation, and how female sporting identities were created through sport.⁵³

Within Britain, the inter-war period is also the focus of Fiona Skillen's 2013 book on women, sport and modernity. In this, she uses several sports – including hockey in Scotland and England – as case studies for understanding the development of organised sport for women during the interwar period, and to show that many regarded it as an intrinsic aspect of modernity.⁵⁴

There are no stand-alone accounts of women's hockey in England, however, beyond two publications written by members of the AEWHa to celebrate its half-centenary and centenary.⁵⁵ Both of these satisfy Martin Polley's criteria for non-academic history books: they 'do not use the machinery of references and bibliographies which allow the reader to check',

⁵¹ Boria Majumdar, The golden years of Indian hockey: 'We climb the victory stand', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 25:12 (October 2008), 1,592-1,611

⁵² Akhtar Nawaz and Rob Hess, The historical background to Pakistan's participation at the Olympic Games and its performances in field hockey, 1948-1956, *International Journal of the History of Sport* 35:9 (2018), 929-948

⁵³ Cristina López-Villar, The beginnings of hockey in 1930s Galicia (Spain): a female phenomenon, *International Journal of the History of Sport* 31:9 (2014), 1,133-1,157

⁵⁴ Fiona Skillen, *Women, sport and modernity in interwar Britain* (Peter Lang, 2013)

⁵⁵ Nancy Tomkins and Pat Ward, *The century makers: a history of the All England Women's Hockey Association* (AEWHa, Shrewsbury 1995) and Marjorie Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey* (St Christopher Press, Letchworth 1946). There is also Nevil Mirov's *The history of hockey* (Lifeline, Staines 1986), which is primarily about the men's game, with a single chapter on the AEWHa.

but instead 'narrate the story of a particular sport without rigorously setting it within the "cultural context"'.⁵⁶

Other typical hockey publications over the years have been 'how to' playing guides and instruction manuals. One of the earliest in England was *Hockey as a Game for Women* (1905) by Edith Thompson, a future president of the AEWH and founding editor of its official magazine, *The Hockey Field*. All such books follow a generic format: a brief chapter on the origins of the game in England and the formation of the AEWH, followed by chapters on rules, technique, the specifics of each position – goalkeeper, backs, halves and forwards – umpiring and coaching.⁵⁷ Numerous clubs have also produced their histories and The Hockey Museum, in Woking, lists more than 90 in its library. For the most part, however, these are written by non-academic, often non-professional authors and tend to be an uncontextualised mix of player memories, season-by-season results, and brief biographies of significant players/administrators. Only a handful are specifically about the women's game.

This thesis aims to address the dearth of secondary material available to those interested in researching the sport and begin the process of creating a hockey-centred counterpoint to the narratives currently found in sport history.

⁵⁶ Polley, *Moving the goalposts*, 10

⁵⁷ Marjorie Pollard was also prolific in this area. Among her books are *Hockey for women* (1930); *Hockey: how to succeed* (1934); *Hockey (know the game)* (1949); *Hockey for all* (1957); and *Your book of hockey* (1959). She also contributed the 'History' chapter to *Women's hockey (from village green to Wembley Stadium)*, published by the AEWH in 1954.

Thesis aims and structure

Covering a period from the late 19th century to the start of World War Two, this chronologically ordered account will explore, for the first time, the challenge posed to the AEWHHA by leagues that emerged in the North and Midlands from 1910. It will also chronicle the rise of an alternative governing body for women's hockey in England. The ELHLA was formed in 1932 to administer the game for those who wished to play for points and prizes. Although geographically limited to the North West, its success in attracting clubs and expanding its competitions eventually forced the AEWHHA to initiate merger talks.

That there even were two women's hockey associations in the early decades of the 20th century – let alone conferences being held to try to unite them – is absent from the historical coverage of the sport to date. The game as organised by the AEWHHA figures prominently, but virtually no research has been done into the teams that played their hockey outside of its remit. If they are mentioned at all, league clubs are described as being for working-class women or girls under the care of welfare organisations. By taking a closer look at one of the earliest leagues, however – and doing a biographical analysis of one of its teams – this thesis will show that the women who opted to play in such competitions were of a similar social standing to those in the governing body. As a consequence, they posed a genuine threat to the ultra-amateur stance of the AEWHHA, and the governing body's struggle to accommodate such organisations is charted in the latter chapters of this thesis.

Initially, however, the genesis of the AEWHHA will be re-examined and a light shone on some of the women who brought it into existence and

influenced its early direction. The involvement in hockey of some of the most prominent women of pre-1939 England will be revealed, and biographical details added to some of the monogrammed individuals who currently populate the few histories on hockey that exist. In revisiting material relating to the origins of the AEWHA, this thesis will also challenge some long-held perceptions about the governing body's early attitude towards the two issues that would become sticking points in its negotiations with the ELHLA – male administrators and playing for cups and in competitions.

Chapter One

This will look at the foundation of the AEWHA in 1895 and chart its early development, making specific reference to its relationship with the HA. Beyond recounting the women's early rebuff by the men's governing body, the secondary literature to date barely considers the relationship between these two associations – or the impact that this early division of the sexes was to have on the development of hockey throughout the 20th century. The women of the AEWHA are frequently described as having been 'deeply wounded' by the HA's decision, and their request for affiliation is said to have been treated with 'disdain'.⁵⁸ Their rejection has been cited as the reason they banned men from holding executive office within their organisation and changed its name – and even why they opted for the 'red rose' All England football badge as their national team's emblem.⁵⁹ But did the founders of the AEWHA really put so much store by being accepted by the HA – and why were they seeking to link

⁵⁸ McCrone, *Playing the game*, 129; Constanzo, 'One can't shake off the women', 37

⁵⁹ McCrone, *Playing the game*, 129; Williams, *A contemporary history of women's sport*, 49

up with their male counterparts in the first place? After all, they were inspired to set up their organisation after learning of the existence of the Irish Ladies Hockey Union (ILHU), which was entirely female-run and separate from the Irish men's association.⁶⁰

By taking a fresh look at the circumstances surrounding the formation of the AEWH, Chapter One will posit an alternative explanation for what influenced the initial direction of the association and offer a reassessment of the relationship between men's and women's hockey. It will also shed light on the formidable and influential network of women involved in founding and fostering the governing body – women for whom self-governance was probably always the preferred option, rather than a backstop. In addition, the often-protracted negotiations that took place within the AEWH over everything from gate receipts to publicity will be examined, as will the factors that influenced the governing body's policy on amateurism.

This chapter will show that the early AEWH was far from a unified body on many of the issues that would later become immutable principles, including playing for cups. As the governing body struggled to maintain its early momentum, and affiliations began to drop away after 1908, some of the compromises it made over competitive hockey to keep early members on board would come back to haunt it, as the demand for leagues increased.

⁶⁰ Information confirmed via email (dated 16 October 2018) by Irene Johnston, past president of the ILHU. Request to access documents relating to the ILHU turned down by Dublin City Archive on 10 December 2018 as they have yet to be catalogued.

Chapter Two

The first serious challenge to the AEWHAs 'non-competitive' policy position came in 1910, when the LHL was formed. Chapter Two will chronicle the formation and development of this competition, and analyse the clubs involved, the trophies for which they competed, and the social backgrounds of some of its players and administrators. Initially, the AEWHAs insisted that LHL players were nearly all 'working girls, only able to play hockey on Saturday afternoon'. Such women and their clubs, said the governing body, 'never have been within the jurisdiction of the AEWHAs, and it does not seem likely that they ever will be'.⁶¹ Thus, the LHL was portrayed as posing no immediate threat to the AEWHAs and its members.

It is a portrayal repeated by McCrone, in her 1991 article 'Class, Gender and English Women's Sport c1890-1914'. She acknowledges that the AEWHAs 'became worried' by the emergence of the LHL, but asserts that the league was formed because 'the number of working-class women's clubs was so considerable'.⁶² No analysis of the teams and players involved in the competition is offered, however, so it is unclear how McCrone has made this causal link. Indeed, she was 'unable to locate the records of the LHL or to plumb the depths of local newspapers from the areas in which the LHL operated'. As a result, she conceded, 'her primary and not very friendly source of information on the league is *The Hockey Field*' – the official magazine of the AEWHAs.⁶³

⁶¹ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

⁶² Kathleen E McCrone, Class, gender and English women's sport c 1890-1914, *Journal of Sport History* 18:1 (Spring 1991), 171

⁶³ *ibid*, fn32

Northern league competition is also identified in Williams' study of hockey and empire as 'the most pressing domestic problem' for the AEWHHA executive by the 1930s. The governing body, she states, risked not having complete control over women's hockey by failing to accept such competitions. However, leagues are portrayed entirely in terms of underprivileged women and welfarism, and there is no sense that they could seriously undermine the authority of the AEWHHA.⁶⁴ The pre-war LHL has tended to be grouped with welfare and works organisations by historians. However, given the limitations on working-class women's access to sport at this time⁶⁵ – and the absence of any analysis of the league's members – can the received impression that it was purely a working-class phenomenon be justified? This thesis will argue that it cannot.

Chapter Two will present evidence that competitions such as the LHL enticed clubs away from the AEWHHA. It will also show – through a detailed examination of one of the earliest league teams, Leigh LHC – that players in the inaugural league were very likely to be from similar backgrounds to many members of the AEWHHA. As a result, the competition posed a real threat to the authority of the governing body by catering for women of similar social standing. Only after World War One was there a more obvious class distinction between some teams in the LHL and the AEWHHA. By this point, however, an initially dismissive governing body was prepared to be more conciliatory towards the leagues as it sought to build the sport back up after the global conflict.

⁶⁴ Williams, *A contemporary history of women's sport*, 164

⁶⁵ Catriona M Parratt, Little means or time: working-class women and leisure in late-Victorian and Edwardian England, *International Journal of the History of Sport* 15:2 (August 1998), 22-53

Chapter Three

Chapter Three will outline the contribution to the war effort of hockey players and consider the extent to which social barriers were maintained or dismantled during four years of hardship and loss. The AEWH, with its preference for friendly games organised by individual clubs, went into abeyance after 1916, but the LHL – with its organised fixture list and central organisation – continued to function throughout World War One. It emerged in 1919 largely intact, while the much-diminished national governing body had to start rebuilding itself in post-war England. Realising that leagues were here to stay – and that it may need the subscription money such organisations could generate to survive and revive – the AEWH began to look at ways of bringing competitions within its jurisdiction.

After tentatively welcoming leagues, however, the governing body – having recovered its strength in the post-war years – began to re-tighten its rules on playing for cups and having men in executive positions within affiliated associations as its attention started to turn towards international affairs. It took the lead in establishing the IFWH and, again, leagues began to feel that the governing body had little to offer them. In 1927, the same year that the IFWH was established, the first of several competitions resigned their membership.

Chapter Three will examine the AEWH's internal struggle with the idea of playing for points and prizes as it tried to accommodate the LHL and other leagues. It will also highlight the governing body's determination to keep the administration of women's hockey in the hands of women and show how its uncompromising attitude set in motion events that would lead to the emergence of a rival organisation.

Chapter Four

For the first time, the rise of an alternative governing body for women's hockey in England will be charted in Chapter Four. It will look at the reasons why the ELHLA came into being in 1932, the organisations and administrators involved in setting it up, the type of competitions and structures it sought to develop, and reaction to the new body within hockey generally and the AEWHa specifically.

While the leagues association had national ambitions, it was – in reality – confined to Lancashire and Cheshire. Despite these geographical limitations, however, it will be argued that the ELHLA became sufficiently influential within seven years of its formation to be invited by the AEWHa to discuss a merger. Among the main agenda items at the spring conference in 1939 were playing for cups and having men on organising committees.⁶⁶ The outbreak of World War Two interrupted these negotiations, however, and the post-war relationship between the governing bodies is beyond the chronological scope of this thesis. The ELHLA continued until the early 1960s, however, so there is an avenue for further research into this topic.⁶⁷

Methodology:

According to Catriona Parratt, 'one task confronting historians is to uncover sources which will enable them to ... begin to establish a better understanding of what women's sport actually encompassed. We need to know what women

⁶⁶ Anon, Governing bodies' meeting, *Manchester Guardian*, 22 March 1939, 3

⁶⁷ Kath Dowthwaite, *Lancashire Central Women's Hockey Association 1930-2010* (Self-published, 2010), 102

did, [and] how they felt about themselves and their experiences.'⁶⁸ With limited secondary material on hockey available, this thesis has sought to find alternative sources of information, to confirm and add to the sport's already published narrative.

It has drawn largely on primary source material located in public archives and other repositories. This includes the AEWHHA collection at the University of Bath, which covers the period from the start of the association in 1895 to 1996, when the English Hockey Association was established to unite the men's and women's governing bodies. The collection comprises minutes of AEWHHA Council meetings and AGMs, rules and regulations, club lists and annual reports. These have proved invaluable in reassessing the evolution of the AEWHHA and in establishing the governing body's attitude towards – and reaction to – league hockey. The club lists have also helped to shed light on the number and type of clubs that were involved in league competitions before and after World War One.

The Hockey Museum (THM) has also proved to be a valuable source of information. Opened in Woking in 2012, it has developed over a similar timeframe as this thesis and is regularly in receipt of new collections, some of which have yet to be archived. Currently, the THM holds more than 650 books dating from the 1890s – mainly the aforementioned club histories and 'how to' guides – clothing, trophies, postcards and stamps, photographs, films and videos, and illustrations, paintings and prints. It also has a complete collection of *The Hockey Field*, the official magazine of the AEWHHA. This underwent

⁶⁸ Catriona Parratt, 'Athletic womanhood': exploring sources for female sport in Victorian and Edwardian England, *Journal of Sport History* 16:2 (Summer 1989), 141

multiple name changes in the decades after its foundation in 1901, but – for simplicity – is referred to as *The Hockey Field* throughout this thesis.⁶⁹ While there are obvious issues of potential bias with this source, it has helped illuminate the controversy that accompanied the emergence of the LHL and the impact that leagues had on the AEWH and its members. The magazine has also been useful for contextualising specific issues within women's hockey in England.

Other archives that have generated useful information include those of Newnham and Girton Colleges, Cambridge; Lancashire County Record Office in Preston; and the Greater Manchester record office, which holds papers and items relating to the Manchester Women's Hockey League, formed in 1921. More than a quarter of a century on from McCrone's 1991 article, however, records for the LHL remain elusive. Archives in the areas with teams in the league have been contacted without success, including Bolton, Bury, Cheshire, Manchester, Oldham, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan & Leigh. Most of these repositories have newspaper archives on microfiche that may illuminate clubs' involvement in the LHL, but searching and notating these sources would be a time-consuming process. Given the limitations of doing research part-time while also working, it would have been impossible to examine all – or even some – of the many teams involved in the competition in this way.

The historian's job, however, has been made considerably easier by digital technology, which offers access to newspaper and magazine archives

⁶⁹ The magazine has been called: *The Hockey Field* (1901-1916: editor Edith Thompson); *The Hockey Field & Lacrosse* (1921-1939: Eustace White; Eustace White/Mrs White; Mrs White/Hilda Begbie; Mrs White); *The Women's Hockey Field* (1946-1955: Marjorie Pollard); *The Hockey Field* (1955-1967: Marjorie Pollard)

via her home computer. Many newspapers have yet to be uploaded to the British Newspaper Archive, but this thesis has plumbed the depths of the local, regional and national publications that are available on the site, and which are added to daily. Reference to a particular newspaper title does not necessarily infer it has a significant connection to or interest in hockey; many local and regional papers would take copy from reporters in London or other major cities, and the same report could appear in several titles. The decision about which version to use was often based on how much of the report – or which specific details – were reproduced. While remaining aware of the limitations of newspapers and magazines as sources, the partiality of archives, and the challenges – as well as the opportunities – posed by digitisation, this work has also made use of other online print-media resources.⁷⁰ These include *The Times*, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Guardian* and *The Observer*, 19th Century British Library Newspapers and 19th Century UK Periodicals.

Census records and the *Oxford National Dictionary of Biography* have been used – in conjunction with many other sources – to research personal details of AEWH and LHL players and administrators. They have helped shed much-needed light not only on the social backgrounds of the women playing hockey at this time, but also, simply, on their first names. Such sources have also provided signposts to familial, social and political connections between people that might not have been made otherwise. This has been a painstaking and time-consuming task, however, and it has not been possible to give first names to all those who feature in this thesis.

⁷⁰ Martin Johnes, Archives and historians of sport, *International Journal of the History of Sport* 32:15 (2015), 1,784-1,798; Paul Gooding, *Historic newspapers in the digital age: 'Search all about it!'* (Routledge, Abingdon, 2017); Adrian Bingham, The digitisation of newspaper archives: opportunities and challenges for historians, *Twentieth Century British History* 21:2 (1 June 2010), 225-231

Summary:

In their 2010 survey of British sport history, Carol Osborne and Fiona Skillen concluded that 'dedicated study of women in sport history remains a peculiarly neglected area of academic research in Britain'.⁷¹ Five years on, they were able to report that the situation had improved somewhat, and that on the basis of published work – specifically in the UK – 'it is now possible to identify a healthier situation'.⁷² Contributing to this improved state of affairs is Jean Williams' 2014 monograph *A Contemporary History of Women's Sport, Part One* and Skillen's own *Women, Sport and Modernity in Interwar Britain*, published in 2013. There is greater analysis of gender as a theme in British historiography and articles by a cadre of female sports historians are appearing more frequently in subject-specific journals – such as *Sport in History* and the *International Journal of the History of Sport* – as well as in broader academic publications. They include work by Rafaelle Nicholson (cricket), Lisa Taylor (rowing), Clare Roche (Alpine climbers) and Samantha-Jayne Oldfield (pedestrianism).⁷³

However, despite being the dominant team sport for women in England during much of the 20th century – run, uniquely, by an all-female administration for more than 100 years and as a purely amateur pursuit for much of that time – hockey still attracts very little attention from historians. Aside from this

⁷¹ Osborne and Skillen, *The state of play*, 189

⁷² Carol A Osborne and Fiona Skillen, Forum: Women in Sport, *Women's History Review* 24:5 (2015), 656

⁷³ See Rafaelle Nicholson, 'Our own paper': evaluating the impact of *Women's Cricket* magazine, 1930-1967, *Women's History Review* 24:5 (2015), 681-699 and Who killed schoolgirl cricket? The Women's Cricket Association and the death of an opportunity, 1945-1960, *History of Education* 41:6 (2012), 771-786; Lisa Taylor, The Women's Amateur Rowing Association 1923-1963: a prosopographical approach, *Sport in History* 38:3 (2018), 307-330; Clare Roche, Women climbers 1850-1900: a challenge to male hegemony?, *Sport in History* 33:3 (2013), 236-259; Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, Running pedestrianism in Victorian Manchester, *Sport in History* 34:2 (2014), 223-248

author's 2017 article *Thus far and no farther*, researchers of the sport in England are limited to general histories of women in sport or non-academic secondary sources written by enthusiasts of the game.⁷⁴

This thesis is the first hockey-centric academic study of the formation of the AEWHHA, its amateur ideals, and the women who founded and nurtured it. It also offers the first detailed account of the emergence of league hockey in the north and midlands of England from 1910 onwards, and of the AEWHHA's reaction to these competitions. In doing so, it brings a new perspective to the subject of amateurism, showing how the philosophy impacted on – and was interpreted by – a major team sport for women in the early 20th century.

This thesis also considers the importance and influence of gender on the development of English hockey in the early decades of the 20th century. It argues that the AEWHHA's commitment to female self-governance – not its opposition to cups and competitions – was the primary reason that a rival governing body emerged, and the formation of the ELHLA is documented here for the first time. It is hoped that this thesis will act as a signpost and springboard for other historians to take up one of the myriad projects that have suggested themselves in the course of researching this thesis.

⁷⁴ Halpin, 'Thus far and no farther': the rise of women's hockey leagues in England from 1910 to 1939

**Chapter 1: 'May it ever remain a society of friends':
the formation and evolution of the AEWHA 1895-1910 – and
the women who made it happen**

The growth of hockey up to World War One has been described as 'one of the major success stories in the early history of women's sport' – yet we know very little about the people or events that contributed to this tale of triumph.¹ Scant research has been done into the personal, social and political networks that helped elicit such success, the processes by which the women negotiated the parameters of their hockey playing, and the administrative logistics that facilitated a growing sport. Interconnections between women's and men's hockey have also been neglected, with little exploration of the relationship between the AEWHA and the HA, or the ways in which their independent governance influenced the development of hockey during the 20th century.

While focusing again, necessarily, on the activities of the AEWHA, this chapter will shine a light on some of the formidable characters who laid the groundwork for the association and steered it through its early years. It will show that hockey and its governing body played a significant role in the lives of some of the most prominent women of their generation – women involved in education, politics, philanthropy and industry, as well as the fight for female emancipation. As would be expected, such boundary-breaking women did not always agree on the most desirable or appropriate model for a sport governing body, especially as they were the first in England to try to establish a female-

¹ McCrone, *Playing the game*, 130; The quote in the title of this chapter was Lilian Faithfull's wish for the AEWHA as it celebrated its 50th anniversary (Lilian M Faithfull, Foreword to Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 2)

only one. Almost everything, from its name to its amateur credentials, were sites of lively contention that were only resolved – sometimes unsatisfactorily – after close-run ballots. This chapter will outline the differences of opinion that surrounded every step of the AEWHAs evolution, revealing it to have been a far more nuanced body than is suggested by the historical literature to date. On the whole, this depicts the early association as a homogenous collective of university-educated women who largely spoke with one voice, particularly on the issue of amateurism. Its importance to the fledgling AEWHAs may have been overstated, however – as might its antipathy towards men and the HA.

Finally, this chapter will chart the rapid growth of women's hockey during the first decade of the 20th century, within the context of the social upheaval taking place in Britain at this time. It will then examine its creeping decline from 1908, and the AEWHAs response to its falling membership figures. This was the first major test of the all-female executive's ability to turn hockey from a 'craze' into a long-term, serious team sport for women and girls. With affiliations dropping away, they had to formulate the benefits of belonging to an association and assert the AEWHAs right to be considered the lead authority for women's hockey in England. This claim would be further tested by the emergence, in 1910, of the first women's hockey league, which opened old debates about the way in which the sport should be governed. From this point onwards, this thesis contends, the AEWHAs amateur credentials and attitude towards men in executive roles became increasingly defined, and redefined, as it sought to emerge intact from changing times.

The beginnings

Winter 1894/95 was a particularly severe one for the British Isles, with ice floes up to seven-feet thick reported on the river Thames.² Such extreme conditions did not put paid to the sporting ambitions of Newnham College, Cambridge, however, and – shortly after Christmas – a team of past and present students packed up their hockey sticks and headed to Ireland. They had been invited to play a series of matches in Dublin by Alice Lyster, a member of Alexandra College staff and its hockey club.³

Newnham's team was led by Isabella Jameson, a maths graduate who – despite defective eyesight and never being very strong in health – was 'indefatigable in every form of athletics and... a member of practically every college team'. She was said to have a quiet, even diffident manner, but her 'unfailing kindness and simplicity won for her respect and friendship in unstinted measure'.⁴ Her father, the Reverend Francis Jameson, had been rector of Coton, Cambridgeshire, and a Fellow of St Catharine's College, but he died – aged 40 – when Isabella was just two years old.⁵ She and her brothers, Walter and Robert, moved to Bristol with their mother, Alicia, and Isabella received private tuition at Miss Brice's School, in Weston-super-Mare.⁶ She went up to Cambridge in 1890 and 'graduated' in 1893, the same year Alice Lyster's younger sister Elizabeth gained a third in classics. Rather more impressively that year, Jameson's Newnham team-mate Edith Stoney

² Science and Society Picture Library – www.scienceandsociety.co.uk/results.asp?image=10326874: accessed 6 November 2018

³ *The Social Review*, 19 January 1895, 244

⁴ Obituary, Newnham College Roll January 1931, 51

⁵ University obituary, *Cambridge Independent Press*, 13 February 1869, 5

⁶ 1871 England Census – Ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 November 2018; Obituary, Newnham College Roll January 1931, 51

achieved a first in maths and was placed 17th wrangler.⁷ Dublin-born Stoney was from a scientific family; her father, George Johnstone Stoney, was a physicist who developed the concept of an atom of electricity and coined the term 'electron', while her younger sister Florence would go on to become the first female radiologist in the UK.⁸ Edith's destiny was to be a pioneering medical physicist and, in 1904, she was among the first group of 'Steamboat Ladies' to be awarded degrees by Trinity College, Dublin.⁹ Over the next three years, more than 700 women who had been refused degrees by Oxford and Cambridge would travel to Ireland to graduate *ad eundem*.¹⁰ Among them was AEWA president Lilian Faithfull and co-founder of Roedean School Penelope Lawrence, who studied natural sciences at Newnham and then lectured at the college for two years before leaving to take on various teaching roles.¹¹ Stoney also went into the classroom after leaving Newnham, teaching maths at Cheltenham Ladies College, under the principalship of Dorothea Beale, and later lecturing at King's College, London. In 1909, she also became inaugural treasurer of the British Federation of University Women (BFUW), working alongside Dr Caroline Spurgeon, who would later influence the AEWA's international aspirations.¹² Among the other maths graduates in the Newnham team were Helen Musson (1894), Mary Windsor (1891) and Margaret Tabor

⁷ An Irish young lady's achievement, *Evening Herald (Dublin)*, 14 June 1893, 2. A wrangler is a Cambridge graduate who achieves a first in the mathematical tripos.

⁸ W B Owen, George Johnstone Stoney, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)*, 23 September 2004 - www.oxforddnb.com: accessed 6 November 2018; Adrian M K Thomas and Arpan K Banerjee, *The history of radiology* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013), 48-54

⁹ Dublin University: degrees conferred on women, *Dublin Evening Mail*, 30 June 1904, 3

¹⁰ S M Parkes, Steamboat ladies, *ODNB*, 4 October 2007 - www.oxforddnb.com: accessed 31 December 2018

¹¹ Marilyn Ogilvie, Joy Harvey and Margaret Rossiter, *The biographical dictionary of women in science: pioneering lives from ancient times to the mid-20th century*, (Routledge, Abingdon 2014), 755

¹² Anna Frost, BFWG Forebears, *BFWG News*, Spring/Summer 2015, 12

(1890)¹³, elder sister of suffragist and social reformer Clara Rackham, who herself captained the college hockey team when she went up to Cambridge in 1895.¹⁴ Also on the boat to Dublin was history graduate Theresa Lawrence, youngest sister of Roedean's Penelope, Millicent and Dorothy Lawrence, and of the soon-to-be first honorary secretary of the AEWHA, Christabel. Theresa would set sail for warmer climes seven years later, to establish a sister school to Roedean in Johannesburg.¹⁵

Hockey enthusiasts in Ireland were keen to see the Newnham team in action, with *Irish Society* reporting 'great excitement... over the coming visit of these ladies, some of whom are said to be among the best lady exponents of the game'.¹⁶ More than 700 people turned out to see them take on Merton at Cullenswood on 9 January, but before the players were able show what they could do, two days of heavy snow had to be cleared from the pitch. The inclement conditions possibly affected the tourists, as Merton 'had decidedly the best of it' in the first half, before Newnham equalised after the break and the match ended 1-1. The visitors were held to another 1-1 draw the next day, by Howth, in a match played 'under the trying circumstances of a snowy ground and abominable weather'. They then lost 2-0 to an Alexandra College 'Junior' XI, while a fourth match – against a combined Merton and Alexandra

¹³ Davis Historical Archive of Female Mathematicians – www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/Davis/Indexes/alphname_T.html: accessed 5 November 2018

¹⁴ Brian Harrison, Rackham (nee Tabor), Clara Dorothea, *ODNB*, 23 September 2004 – www.oxforddnb.com: accessed 4 November 2018

¹⁵ In memoriam Theresa Lawrence, *The South African Roedean Magazine*, No.66 May 1951, 3-9. Also in the Newnham team was a Miss Silcox – possibly (Lilian) Alice Silcox, youngest sister of headmistress and feminist Lucy Mary Silcox (Newnham 1881-85), and herself a prominent educationalist. (Personal, *Cambridge Independent Press*, 24 November 1893, 5; Social record, *Hull Daily Mail*, 25 July 1921, 4; Sybil Oldfield, Silcox, Lucy Mary 1862-1947, *ODNB* 6 January 2011 – www.oxforddnb.com: accessed: 16 January 2019). Other Newnham players for whom biographical details have yet to be confirmed are Brunner, La Cour and Legg.

¹⁶ *Irish Society*, 22 December 1894, 1212

College team – had to be cancelled, the extreme winter finally proving too harsh even for hockey players.¹⁷

Captaining the triumphant Alexandra College Junior XI was four-times Irish tennis champion Louisa Martin, who would win a further five national singles titles by 1903. She also claimed four Irish doubles titles with Florence Stanuelli between 1887 and 1891, but Stanuelli retired from competitive tennis in 1893 and, the following year, became honorary secretary of the newly formed Irish Ladies Hockey Union (ILHU). She would be elected its president in 1900, with Martin replacing her as head of the governing body in 1901.¹⁸ The inaugural president, however, was Merton HC's Alice Strangways, whose husband, Leonard, was headmaster of St Stephen's Green School in Dublin, and, later, president of the Irish Schoolmasters' Association.¹⁹

The ILHU had come into being on 20 October 1894, after Alice Lyster and her colleague Mary Story called a meeting to discuss forming an organisation along the lines of the men's hockey union (IHU). This had been set up 18 months earlier, but there appears to have been no discussion among the ILHU's founder members – Alexandra College, Beechfield, Donnybrook, Dundrum, Howth Ladies and Merton – about affiliating to it.²⁰ It is unclear what prompted the Irish women to organise at this time, less than 12 weeks before

¹⁷ *The Social Review*, 19 January 1895, 243

¹⁸ Ryan, Mark, *Louisa Martin's Record at the Irish Championships (1885-1908)*, Tennis Forum, 14 July 2018, www.tennisforum.com/59-blast-past/393050-louisa-martins-record-irish-championships-1885-1908-a.html; *A biographical sketch of the Irish sportswoman Florence Stanuelli*, Tennis Forum, 29 June 2015, www.tennisforum.com/59-blast-past/913641-biographical-sketch-irish-sportswoman-florence-stanuelli.html – both accessed 6 November 2018. Stanuelli and Martin did enter the 1895 Irish doubles championship, but they lost in the semi-final.

¹⁹ Jennie Macfie, Strangways Co. Leitrim, Co. Kilkenny Messageboard, 13 January 2002 – Ancestry.co.uk; accessed 7 November 2018

²⁰ Alex celebrate 120th anniversary on St Patrick's Day, The Hook, 16 March 2013 – www.hookhockey.com/index.php/2013/03/alex-celebrate-120th-anniversary-on-st-patricks-day: accessed 7 November 2018

the arrival in Dublin of Newnham. It is also unclear whether the invitation to tour was sent to Cambridge before 20 October. If it was, were Merton and Howth – as well as Alexandra College – always on the fixture list, or was the schedule altered to promote the new union? If the invitation hadn't been sent, were Alice Lyster's overtures to Newnham all about persuading some of the 'best lady exponents of the game' to set up an equivalent organisation in England so they could start playing international games? The absence of any other national governing body to challenge to matches would have been brought into sharp relief for the ILHU at the tail end of 1894, when the men's union started making plans for its first international fixtures – against Wales, in Rhyl, on 26 January 1895 and England, in London, on 16 March.²¹ If the women were to follow a similar development trajectory, a rival association would need to be set up – and after a week of sport and socialising in Dublin, Isabella Jameson was keen to oblige.

Gathering support for a governing body

On her return to England, Jameson contacted some of the leading university and women's clubs in the country – or at least the south-east of it – to set in motion a plan. There was by no means universal enthusiasm for a governing body, perhaps because organising an international fixture with Ireland was the primary driver for setting it up. Private clubs were few and far between in 1895, and new ones often found it hard to establish themselves, disappearing as quickly as they appeared. Even Wimbledon – England's second-oldest club, founded in 1889 – struggled to find its feet early on. 'We played only two

²¹ Hockey, *Irish Daily Independent*, 21 December 1894, 7

matches the first season,' recalled player Margaret Bloxam, 'both against [East] Molesey [the oldest club, established 1887]. But we were really not ready for matches so soon and our first experiences were distinctly disagreeable... We tried two practice games a week in our second season. It did not answer, however. Members were too busy to come twice and we got disappointingly small attendances, our club not being large at the best of times.'²² Despite being on a firmer footing by 1895, Wimbledon could not be persuaded of the benefits of a national governing body and declined to get involved at the beginning. The universities, too, were less than wholehearted in their support, and 'imposed conditions and reserved rights'.²³ Having played their first varsity match in 1894, Oxford and Cambridge – at least – may have viewed the cultivation of these fixtures as more important than helping to establish international ones. Either way, it was becoming clear that a governing body would not be in place to facilitate an international fixture before the end of the 1894/95 season. Alexandra College did, however, accept a return invitation to tour England in the April. Whether this trip was arranged while Newnham were still in Dublin is unclear, but it offered an opportunity for friendships to be renewed and hockey networks to be strengthened.

Captained by ILHU secretary Stanuall, the Irish team – including Louisa Martin in goal – called first at Parkstone, near Bournemouth, where they were hosted by a Miss Lyster, of the newly opened Bourne School for Girls.²⁴ After

²² Trudy Hutchings, *The suburban sportswomen: the first one hundred years of Wimbledon Ladies Hockey Club*, (Peter Simmons, Norwich 1990), 12

²³ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 4

²⁴ Our history, Bournemouth Collegiate School – www.bournemouthcollegiateschool.co.uk/about-us/hour-history - accessed: 14 January 2019. It is unclear to which Lyster sister this refers, but probably Alice rather than Elizabeth. Despite being instrumental in setting up the ILHU and organising Newnham's trip to Dublin, Alice was not part of the 1895 Alexandra College touring team

playing three games – against a school XI, Bournemouth and Southbourne – they headed to Brighton, and the Lawrences. Here they took on Wimbledon House School (later known as Roedean), Royal Holloway College, and Newnham Past and Present Students.²⁵ On the final weekend of their visit, Alexandra College defeated a combined Cambridge colleges team 2-0, the Girton and Newnham players unable to repeat their varsity match performance of three weeks earlier, when they beat Oxford 5-4.²⁶ While still in Brighton, however, Alexandra College had also taken part in a pseudo international game against a side that *The Sketch* described as an 'All England Union Team'.²⁷ This English XI had been selected less than two weeks earlier after trials organised by Emily (Edith) Godschall Johnson, captain of East Molesey and a prominent tennis player. Between 1901 and 1914, Johnson competed at Wimbledon every year bar one – gaining her best result in 1910, when she lost in the All Comers final to Dorothea Lambert Chambers – and, in 1909, she won the Northern Championship.²⁸ In the mid-1890s, though, her focus was very much on hockey and, together with Elizabeth Guinness, vice-principal of Royal Holloway College in Egham, she had responded positively to Jameson's call to set up a national association. While this idea was still waiting to take off,

to England (*The Social Review*, 6 April 1895, 467) – so it is likely she was hosting the side and playing against them instead

²⁵ *The Social Review*, 6 April 1895, 467. Alexandra College lost to Wimbledon House School, but beat Royal Holloway 4-0 and Newnham 3-0. They also played, and easily beat, a Birmingham side en route to Brighton. (The world of sport, *The Sketch*, 24 April 1895, 701)

²⁶ *The Social Review*, 20 April 1895, 502; Bully-off, Hockey notes, *Athletic News*, 1 April 1895, 6

²⁷ The world of sport, *The Sketch*, 24 April 1895, 701

²⁸ The Clubman, Lawn tennis at Wimbledon: players and play, *The Sketch*, 6 July 1910, 428; Rollo, Johnson, Edith (Emily Frances Godschall Johnson), Tennis Forum, 26 March 2014 – www.tennisforum.com; accessed 29 November 2017

however, the three women decided to raise 'as good an "English" team as they could' to face the Irish.²⁹

On the last Saturday in March, Jameson, Johnson and Guinness gathered prospective players at a pitch in Neasden to not only assess their abilities and pick a team, but also to extol to a captive audience the benefits of having a governing body. According to their near contemporary Marjorie Pollard – who played 41 times for England between 1921 and 1937³⁰ – it was 'an astute move and extremely good propaganda on players keyed up to face the Irish team'.³¹ No details have been found of who made the Union team, and the match against Alexandra College – on Wednesday 10 April 1895 – ended in an anti-climactic 0-0 draw.³² Afterwards, however, a meeting was held to discuss how to progress the idea of an English women's hockey association.

The genesis of the AEWH

Beyond 'Brighton', the official record of this meeting does not say where it was held or who attended. However, players and officials who were 'not actually in at the beginning... remember the talk that went round the clubs about the meeting in the tea shop in Brighton'.³³ Pollard, therefore, would have been well versed in the story by the time she wrote her account of the formation of the AEWH, in which she reports the presence of Jameson, Johnson and

²⁹ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 5

³⁰ Wilson, Judith, Pollard, Marjorie Anne (1899-1982), *ODNB*, 23 September 2004 – www.oxforddnb.com: accessed 12 May 2019

³¹ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 5

³² The world of sport, *The Sketch*, 24 April 1895, 701. Dublin-based publication *The Social Review* (25 April 1895, 502) reports Alexandra College beating 'All England' 3-0, but carries no score for the Newnham Past and Present Students game, so may have confused the teams

³³ Edith Thompson, Foreword to Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 2

Guinness, as well as Christabel Lawrence and Emily Tatham.³⁴ Lawrence volunteered to be treasurer and honorary secretary and, literally, the first action of this yet-to-be constituted organisation led to the kind of internal debate that would become characteristic of the AEWHA.

It concerned the new organisation's name. Minutes taken at the tea-shop gathering were originally headed 'Preliminary meeting of the women's hockey association' – but 'women's' was later scored through and replaced by 'ladies'.³⁵ It may have been a contemporaneous amendment by Jameson *et al*, or it may have been altered after the first general meeting in November 1895. There, 'after discussion of a former decision not hitherto recorded', it was agreed that 'the name of the Ladies' Hockey Association [LHA] be the title of this association'.³⁶ Whether delegates were simply rubber-stamping a change that had already been made at the preliminary meeting or insisting – for the first time – that 'women's' be changed to 'ladies' is not clear; no details of the discussion or any subsequent vote are given. The fact that an amendment was necessary, however, shows that women's hockey in England was a contested space from the very start and individual members were inclined to be more radical than the corporate body would allow them to be. Having met with some resistance to the idea of an association, they perhaps took the politic view that 'ladies' sounded less strident and more respectable as they endeavoured to convince clubs to join. It was not a position they took for very long, though. Having agreed at an interim meeting to add the words 'All England' to the name, delegates at the 1896 AGM voted by six to three to

³⁴ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 5. Pollard refers to the women mostly by their initials and surnames, so first names have been added

³⁵ Minutes of the LHA preliminary meeting, 10 April 1895, UoB Archive A/1/1, 1

³⁶ LHA AGM minutes, 23 November 1895, UoB Archive A/1/1, 5

change it again – to the All England Women's Hockey Association (AEWHA).³⁷ The amendment was proposed by Lawrence and seconded by president Lilian Faithful, who – six years later – would also succeed in changing the name of King's College Ladies' Department, of which she was vice-president, to King's College Women's Department, because 'the former did not pass exams but the latter did'.³⁸ Again, the AGM minutes shed no light on why the AEWHA members reversed their previously agreed position on their organisation's name, nor is there any record of the discussion that must have taken place. McCrone, however, describes the decision as 'controversial', and appears to suggest it was taken in direct reaction to being rejected for affiliation by the HA.³⁹ If this was the case, however, why was the name change not proposed at the 1895 general meeting, when the men's rejection letter was read out – especially as some members had been prepared to use 'women's' from the off?

Approaching the HA

Another unanswered question is why the AEWHA founders sought affiliation with the HA in the first place. After all, they had been inspired (encouraged) to set up their organisation by the ILHU, which was entirely female-run and separate from the men's association. There is no indication in the minutes of the Brighton meeting that they were planning such a move. Indeed, one particular ruling adopted in the tea-shop indicates the women's desire to carve

³⁷ Minutes of the meeting of working committee of the LHA, 14 January 1896, UoB Archive A/1/1, 7; AEWHA AGM minutes, 30 September 1896, UoB Archive A/1/1, 15

³⁸ Williams, *A contemporary history of women's sport*, 53. The King's College Ladies' Department changed its name in 1902 (King's College London Archive Catalogues – www.kingscollections.org/catalogues/kclca/collection/k/10ki30-1; accessed 9 November 2018

³⁹ McCrone, *Playing the game*, 129

out their own identity and gives an insight into their early attitude to playing for silverware. While they decided to follow the men's playing rules, the new governing body made its own regulations about how committees were to be formed and agreed to 'the omission of the men's 'Rule 12'. This HA regulation stated that 'no affiliated association, and no club belonging to the Hockey Association, and no player or member of any such club shall institute or take part in any hockey challenge cup or prize competition'. Anyone doing so would be 'dealt with by the council under Rule 13' – that is, they would be asked to relinquish their membership.⁴⁰ Rejection of Rule 12 by the founders of the AEWHHA shows they were open to their clubs playing for trophies. It also suggests they were not – at this point – expecting to affiliate to the HA because, logically, they would have had to abide by its rules. When the application was made, though, is unclear. Beyond saying that the women's approach had been rebuffed, the 1895 AGM minutes shed no light on the matter. It must have been quite a last-minute decision, however, because the matter was only dealt with by the HA the night before the AEWHHA's first general meeting.

There is no mention of an affiliation request at the men's AGM on 30 September 1895, when the business of the meeting was 'not very extensive and the proceedings only extended over thirty-five minutes'.⁴¹ This suggests the letter had yet to be sent, as it seems unlikely that the HA would have passed up an opportunity to gauge the opinion of its general meeting. The matter eventually came before members of the HA committee on 22 November

⁴⁰ HA, *Authorised rules of the game of hockey 1895-96* (Horace Cox, London 1895), 10

⁴¹ HA: the annual general meeting, *The Sporting Life*, 2 October 1895, 6

1895, when they gathered at honorary secretary Stanley Christopherson's stockbroker offices in the City of London. After clarifying a few playing rules, their attention turned to the AEWhA's letter, which asked 'for leave for such [an] association and for a representative in the Hockey Association'. It was decided, however, that the HA 'could not officially recognise in any way the proposed association and that it was entirely a matter for the ladies' clubs to decide whether they would form an association without any reference to the Hockey Association'.⁴² That the women's first general meeting took place within 24 hours suggests they had already decided, and that their plans were not dependent on receiving a positive response from the men. So what was their motivation for, in effect, requesting permission to form and affiliate?

Undoubtedly, in 1895, the women regarded the HA as the lead hockey authority in England; as already mentioned, for example, they adopted the same playing rules as the men's association.⁴³ Strong connections also existed between the men's and women's games because clubs, whether formally linked or not, were often populated by siblings or other family members. Mary D'Oyley (nee Piper), for example – who featured in the first AEWhA team of 1896 – played club hockey for East Molesey, where her younger brothers, Charles and Arthur, turned out for the men's teams. Charles Piper represented the Surrey club at the 1886 meeting to set up the HA and was a member of the committee that turned down the women's request for affiliation.⁴⁴ The Pipers' team-mate Charles E Tatham, meanwhile, was the

⁴² Minutes of HA committee meeting, 22 November 1895, National Hockey Museum Archive

⁴³ Minutes of LHA preliminary meeting, 10 April 1895, UoB Archive A/1/1, 2

⁴⁴ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 7; Hockey: Molesey v West Kent, *Surrey Comet*, 3 February 1894, 2; 1891 England Census – Ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 November 2018; and Mirov, *The history of hockey*, 86

brother of Emily Tatham – one of the 'Brighton tea-shop five' and another AEWHHA 1896 representative. She, too, played for East Molesey and was said to have a 'formidable appearance', being tall, with short cropped red hair, and dressing 'like a man'. She was also 'a fine musician', performing to critical acclaim and in front of royalty.⁴⁵ A third member of the 1896 team, Ethel Robson, played for Blackheath, where her brother Philip Appleby Robson was captain of the men's team. The club hosted England women's first home international against Ireland in 1897. It may be significant that Christopherson and Edward Larpent Agar – who chaired the 1886 meeting that brought the HA into existence – both played for Wimbledon, whose women initially refused to join the AEWHHA. Agar's sister Madeleine was a member of the south-west London club, as was Lilian Clapham⁴⁶, who would go on to captain the 1897 England team and whose brother Edward played in the men's first international against Ireland in 1895.

Given these (presumably cordial) familial links, it may have seemed logical to the founders of the AEHWA to link up with the men and work with them to develop the sport. It would certainly have been natural for those approached by Jameson about forming a governing body to sound out hockey-playing brothers, uncles and friends – but whether any of these men suggested they approach the HA needs further investigation. The existence of such close, personal relationships between the men's and the women's games does, however, challenge McCrone's assertion that the AEWHHA's affiliation request was made 'with all the audacity and naivety of extreme youth'. Even

⁴⁵ Tatham family history, The Tathams of County Durham – www.saxonlodge.net: accessed: 11 November 2018

⁴⁶ 125 years of hockey: Wimbledon LHC, *Wimbledon Hockey Club Newsletter* July 2014, 6

discounting the fact that Isabella Jameson was 29 years old in 1895 and Christabel Lawrence – who, as honorary secretary, would have sent the letter – 26, this statement suggests the women were approaching an organisation of which they had no knowledge or understanding. It also infers that the men's association was never going to entertain an approach from enthusiastic but, as yet, unorganised women, barely out of college, who were 'little more than a company of friends'.⁴⁷ The corollary of this assertion, however, is that the HA was a serious, well-established national governing body – when, in fact, it had been in existence for only nine years and was on its second incarnation.

Genesis of the HA

The first HA had been formed on 10 April 1875, when representatives from seven teams, all based in south-west London, met at Cannon Street hotel in London. It did not last, however, and England's oldest club never signed up to the association because of the difficulties it saw in harmonising playing rules. Blackheath, established in 1861, had developed a 15-aside version of game – the consequence, perhaps, of evolving alongside a rugby football team. Each side consisted of a goalkeeper, two backs, two three-quarter backs, three half-backs and seven forwards, but play started as soon as 10 people were present, with the others joining in as and when they arrived at the ground. The pitch had to be at least 180 yards long and 60-70 yards across, and the net-less goals were 10 yards wide. Players could use either side of their oak, flat-backed sticks to play the 'ball', which was in fact a cube of solid rubber. This

⁴⁷ McCrone, *Playing the game*, 129

had to be boiled frequently to keep it elastic, and its use resulted in a style of play that relied largely on hitting and hacking.⁴⁸

Teddington HC, however, had been set up by cricketers who wanted a winter sport to play, so it was logical that they would use old cricket balls. This decision, and the relatively level pitch on their outfield in Bushy Park, Middlesex, resulted in a more free-flowing style of play, in which stickwork and passing were important. Their game was based loosely on the rules of association football, which was also played in the royal park, with a similar sized pitch and 11 players on each side.⁴⁹ It was Teddington's 'dribbling' game that the HA adopted when it was reconstituted in January 1886 – and, a year later, an organisation for those who preferred Blackheath's 'hitting' version was formed in the west of England. The National Hockey Union (NHU) was 'open to all clubs and schools in England' and Blackheath initially aligned itself with this body.⁵⁰ The club would remain affiliated to the NHU until 1893 and, shortly after its withdrawal, the union folded.⁵¹ Reference was still being made to 'the English Union' in newspaper reports of 1906, however, so the exact date of its demise appears to be in question.⁵²

At the time that the AEWH was enquiring about affiliation, therefore, the men's association had barely begun to bring teams together under the same playing rules. Six years after its formation, the HA's total membership was still only 37 clubs, so it may simply have recognised that it had enough to

⁴⁸ A P Hodgson, Blackheath Hockey Club: The first 100 years, on Blackheath & Elthamians HC website – www.blackheath.co.uk/a/history-32741.html?page=2: accessed 13 November 2017

⁴⁹ Ken Howells, The oldest club in the world, Teddington HC website – www.teddingtonhockey.club/history/: accessed 16 November 2017

⁵⁰ Hockey, *Bristol Mercury*, 5 October 1887, 5

⁵¹ Nevill Mirov, *The history of hockey*, 93

⁵² Hockey: Western Counties Union, *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 September 1906, 3

do in building up and standardising the men's game without taking on the women's too.⁵³ Protecting the masculinity of their sport is another reason the men are said to have refused the AEWHHA's request for affiliation, but, as outlined in the Introduction, there was no great opposition from male players to women taking up the game, and mixed hockey matches were frequent and popular.⁵⁴ Beyond noting receipt of Christopherson's letter, the minutes of the AEWHHA AGM offer no clues as to the reasons behind the rejection. Nor do they reveal the women's reaction to it; the business of the meeting simply continued, with decisions made about how the organisation was to be run, when subscriptions should be paid, and what constituted a quorum. Emily Johnson was also named captain of the yet-to-be-selected All England team.⁵⁵ Interestingly, where the minutes make mention of inviting Esher, Wimbledon and Bournemouth to join the AEWHHA, it is deemed necessary to clarify, through the insertion of 'LH' before 'clubs', that it is the women's teams that the governing body intends to approach.⁵⁶ Otherwise, there is no evidence – in the minutes of 1895 or any other year – that the AEWHHA agreed to hit back at their male counterparts by banning men from holding executive office within it or any affiliated association. Over the next 100 years, however, no man did serve on the executive of the women's governing body – so either an informal, unminuted decision was taken in 1895, or those not in at the beginning remember the talk that went around the clubs, and it became 'policy' over time as the AEWHHA thrived with an all-female administration.

⁵³ Local sporting notes, *Surrey Comet*, 1 October 1892, 2

⁵⁴ See Akimoto, *A very serious part of hockey: mixed hockey in England before 1914*

⁵⁵ Minutes of the LHA AGM, 23 November 1895, UoB Archive A/1/1, 3

⁵⁶ *ibid*, 5

There does not, however, appear to have been a stringently applied ban on men holding positions of authority within affiliated associations. In 1900, for instance – after county associations had been established – Colonel William Leir enquired about affiliating a Western Counties LHA that he was forming from seven county clubs, each representing '30 or 40 clubs'. His request was turned down by the AEWHHA because 'it could not take cognisance of county teams formed on lines other than those laid down in [its] rules'; however, the governing body made no mention of Colonel Leir's sex being a bar to his holding office.⁵⁷ Indeed, the AEWHHA's 1913/14 clubs list reveals at least four male honorary secretaries among the affiliated clubs, including H V Crockford, of Catford LHC in Kent – county association of the then AEWHHA president Frances Heron-Maxwell.⁵⁸ There is also evidence of much informal cooperation between male and female players; James Nicholson Smith, captain of Blackheath, donated one dozen All England touchflags to the AEWHHA⁵⁹, while Messrs J Tatham and F Rowe ran the line as referees at the 1897 England v Ireland international.⁶⁰ In 1899, honorary secretary of the AEWHHA Ethel Robson contributed a chapter on women's hockey to a book edited by her brother, Philip, and Nicholson Smith.⁶¹ She also wrote *Hockey for Men and Women* with her sibling in 1903.⁶² Many years later, Eustace E White – who was on the HA committee that rejected the women's affiliation request⁶³ – took over as editor of *The Hockey Field*. This

⁵⁷ Minutes of AEWHHA Council meeting, 19 March 1900, UoB Archive A/1/1, 117

⁵⁸ AEWHHA Affiliated Clubs List 1913/14, UoB Archive A/5/12

⁵⁹ Minutes of AEWHHA special council meeting, 2 April 1897, UoB Archive A/1/1, 38

⁶⁰ Hockey: ladies international match, *The Sporting Life*, 2 March 1897, 3

⁶¹ Hockey, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 4 November 1899, 338. The book in question was *Hockey: historical and practical* (A D Innes and Company, London 1899)

⁶² New publications, *Kentish Independent*, 2 January 1903, 7

⁶³ Minutes of HA committee meeting, 22 November 1895, National Hockey Museum Archive

would suggest no grudge was held by the women; while the official magazine of the AEWHHA was nominally independent of the governing body, it is unlikely that founding editor Edith Thompson would have handed over control to someone of whom it disapproved.

It is possible, given the many personal and familial connections within hockey, that members of the AEWHHA were surprised – perhaps even ‘deeply wounded’ – by the men’s refusal to join forces.⁶⁴ Within 24 hours of the HA’s official rejection, however, they were calmly continuing with the business of setting up a governing body. This suggests their intention was always to be self-governing, even had they been allowed to come under the umbrella of the gender-non-specific Hockey Association. After all, a woman would not have been invited to serve as an executive officer in the HA, so why would a man be asked to help run the women’s game? A link-up with the men might have proved a mutually beneficial move, but it was not a necessity – particularly not for the high-achieving, well-connected and wealthy founding members of the AEWHHA.

AEWHHA women

‘No student of mine ever says “I cannot”. The day may come when you are nervous. Remember that you are one of Madame Österberg’s students, and it will be enough to carry you through any situation.’⁶⁵ These words may have been resonating in Christabel Lawrence’s ears when she stepped up to be the AEWHHA’s inaugural honorary secretary and treasurer at the tea-shop meeting

⁶⁴ McCrone, *Playing the game*, 129

⁶⁵ Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting females*, 76

in Brighton. One of 14 siblings – whose eldest sisters rescued the family's finances by opening a school after their barrister father had been seriously injured in a climbing accident – Lawrence had been a very early student of Madame Österberg's groundbreaking Hampstead physical education college. She graduated in 1887, just two years after it had been set up.⁶⁶ Österberg was the leading exponent of Swedish gymnastics in Britain, and her aim was to create a new physical education profession for young, middle-class women. Described as 'an inspiring and utterly convincing teacher', she was also 'famous for the sharpness of her tongue'. Students arriving at her college for the first time were apparently told: 'Ze clever girls go to university, ze pretty girls get married – and you come here.'⁶⁷ It was a test of character to even get into the college sometimes, never mind graduate from it. Ethel Adair Impey (nee Roberts) – who later taught at Anstey and Chelsea colleges – recalled being refused a place in 1895 because she was too short. Despite pointing out that she was 'as tall as Madam [sic] herself and a quarter of an inch taller than Queen Victoria', Impey was told she would have to go away and matriculate before she could be considered for admission. So she spent a year at Westfield College, Hampstead, cramming for exams, and was finally allowed into Dartford in September 1896.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Anne Longley, 'The opening of Roedean School in Kemptown in 1885', 11 February 2011, Kemp Town Society website – www.kempton-society.org.uk/local-interest/the-opening-of-roedean-school-in-kempton-in-1885: accessed: 25 November 2017; Jane Claydon, Madame's pioneers: Christabel Lawrence, 12 November 2015, Bergman Österberg Union website – bergmanosterbergunion.org.uk/?page_id=524: accessed 10 November 2018

⁶⁷ Felicity A Crump, Dartford & Madam Oesterberg [sic], in *E Adair Impey: letters of remembrance by some of her family and friends*, collected in 1965 by Barbara L Whitelaw (Guernsey Press Company, Guernsey nd)

⁶⁸ *ibid.* Madame Österberg's college transferred from Hampstead to Dartford in 1895

By this time, Lawrence was putting what she had learned under Madame Österberg into practice at Wimbledon House School, where she was in charge of teaching drill and games.⁶⁹ Under her sisters' joint principalship, the school aimed to offer girls a 'thorough education, physical, intellectual and moral', with two to three hours a day given over to outdoor exercise and games.⁷⁰ Pupils were encouraged to take part in hockey, tennis and cricket, as well as running, swimming, gymnastics, fencing and dancing. It was a sports programme 'unheard of for girls in England'.⁷¹ Penelope Lawrence spoke of 'carrying on a crusade' as she faced down 'hostile critics' and 'much opposition from the parents' as she introduced hockey and cricket to the school. If games were only exercise, she believed, other agencies might replace them, 'but considered as a means of training the character they stand alone'.⁷² The Lawrence sisters were women happy to push boundaries and they made quite an impression on their students. One recalled that 'the Misses Lawrence always vaulted over gates instead of opening them, or [sic] that we all played football in knickerbockers before breakfast, an incredible notion in the nineties!'⁷³

At least two honorary secretaries of the AEWHA's founding clubs – Hannah Cohen (Newnham College) and Sydney Renée Courtauld (Old Newnham Students) – were former pupils of Roedean. Cohen read for the classical tripos at Newnham between 1894 and 1897, and, in 1900, became the first woman to be elected to the Jewish Board of Guardians, which

⁶⁹ Claydon, Madame's pioneers: Christabel Lawrence

⁷⁰ Katherine E McCrone, Play up! Play up! And play the game! Sport at the late Victorian public schools, in Mangan & Park, *From 'fair sex' to feminism*, 112

⁷¹ P C McIntosh, *Physical education in England since 1800* (G Bell & Sons, London 1952), 129

⁷² Fletcher, *Women first*, 33-34

⁷³ Ogilvie, Harvey and Rossiter, *The biographical dictionary of women in science*, 755

provided relief to London's Jewish poor. Described as a 'brilliant administrator, she would be made an OBE for her work with the Treasury during World War One, and later served on the governing bodies of both Roedean and Newnham.⁷⁴ Courtauld also took up social work, with the Women's University Settlement, and was active in the suffrage movement. Her family were wealthy silk manufacturers, now most famously associated with London's Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, which was founded by Renée's brother Samuel. She, too, would become known for her philanthropy, giving generously to the National Trust to secure a portion of Hertfordshire's Ashridge Estate in 1937⁷⁵ and leaving a bequest to, among others, the British Federation of University Women.⁷⁶ Courtauld played hockey for Braintree and Bocking and was a club-mate of Clara Tabor, whose family lived in the area and whose elder sister Margaret was on the local school board.⁷⁷

Girton College HC's honorary secretary was Hope Cozens-Hardy, a mathematics student and youngest daughter of Herbert Cozens-Hardy, a Lord Justice and later Master of the Rolls. Described by *The Tatler* as 'a distinguished example of the union of mind and muscle'⁷⁸, Cozens-Hardy represented England in 1902, by which time she was playing her club hockey for Chiswick.⁷⁹ A year later, she married Richard A Pilkington, of the glass-

⁷⁴ Geoffrey Alderman, Cohen, Hannah Floretta (1875-1946), philanthropist and civil servant, *ODNB*, 23 September 2004 – www.oxforddnb.com: accessed 10 November 2018

⁷⁵ Kitty Gurnos-Davies, Who was Sydney Renée Courtauld?, National Trust website – www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/who-was-sydney-rene-courtauld: accessed 10 November 2018

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Crawford, *The women's suffrage movement: a reference guide 1866-1928* (UCL Press, London 1999), 143

⁷⁷ Shilling fund for the dependents of Essex reservists, *Essex County Chronicle*, 2 February 1900, 5. For more on the Tabor family of Bocking, see Marjorie J Tompsett, *The Tabor diaries 1868-1870* (2013) – upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9f/Henry_Tabor_Diaries.pdf: accessed 11 November 2018

⁷⁸ Gossip of the hour: the tripos and hockey, *The Tatler*, 5 August 1903, 193

⁷⁹ *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 15 March 1902, 98

making family, and wedding cake was distributed to each of the 5,000 workers at Pilkington Brothers' St Helens factory.⁸⁰

Moor Green's Helen Chamberlain, another Newnham old girl (maths, 1892), was the daughter of Midlands industrialist Arthur Chamberlain, brother of politician and social reformer Joseph and uncle of future Prime Minister Neville.⁸¹ In 1899, she married engineer Gerald Beesly, eldest son of historian and positivist Professor Edward Spencer Beesly.⁸² It was Chamberlain's letter to the AEWH, announcing that she was giving up hockey and retiring from the Council because of her impending marriage, that 'spoke volumes' about the interest women retained in the sport once they had found a husband, according to McCrone. 'Most women, however skilled and enthusiastic, relinquished the pleasures of hockey upon engagement or marriage,' she writes, 'for as a team game it was considered incompatible with the traditional image and duties of a respectable matron.'⁸³ Married women playing hockey cannot have been that unusual, however, as eight rose to the heights of England international before 1912, including three who won caps both before and after their weddings.⁸⁴

Another honorary secretary with connections to the world of engineering was Winifred Hawes (The Crofts, Walton and Weybridge), a

⁸⁰ *Bromyard News*, 6 August 1903, 2

⁸¹ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 18 June 1892, 5

⁸² Marriage of Miss Helen Chamberlain, *Bridgnorth Journal*, 9 September 1899, 7

⁸³ Minutes of AEWH special general meeting, 28 April 1899, UoB Archive A/1/1, 88-89; McCrone, *Playing the game*, 134-5

⁸⁴ Information collated from Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 48-51, and Susan Noel (ed), *Sportswoman's manual* (Hutchinson, London 1950). The eight married players were: Mary D'Oyley (E Molesey, 1896); Alice Mabel Pickering (Midlands; 1900, 1901, 1902); Mrs Gardner (North, 1903); Mrs Armstrong (South, 1905, 1906); R Boycott (nee Green; South/Midlands – 1907, 1910); K Nelson-Smith (nee Green; Midlands – 1908, 1912); E Fleuret (nee Colbrann; South, 1909, 1910); Mrs Wilcox (East – 1912).

kindergarten teacher and great-niece of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Her father, Captain Arthur Briscoe Hawes, was the son of Brunel's sister, Sophia.⁸⁵ Columbine captain Ruth Sparrow, meanwhile, was an Oxford contemporary of Lilian Faithfull, albeit at Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), not Somerville.⁸⁶ A talented all-round sportswoman, she represented Oxford at tennis for three years in the inter-university matches, founded the London-based Columbine club for former LMH students in 1893, and captained Mid Surrey Ladies Golf Club.⁸⁷ In 1892, she was made permanent secretary of the 'Britannia Roll' of the Imperial Federation League, the women's branch of an apolitical organisation that sought to promote the idea of closer union between Britain and its self-governing colonies. Among its first members were Anne Clough, principal of Newnham College, Elizabeth Welsh, principal of Girton College, and women's rights activist Emily Faithfull, a cousin of Lilian.⁸⁸ Also on the Roll was Lady Florence Dixie, who – with Nettie Honeyball – set up the touring British Ladies Football Club (BLFC) in late 1894.⁸⁹ As will be outlined later in this chapter, the paths of the radical BLFC and the fledgling AEWHF would coincide on the south-coast of England in the spring of 1895.

Royal Holloway's representative at the first AGM was the Honourable Margaret Heneage, fifth daughter of Edward Heneage, MP for Lincoln and

⁸⁵ Rosamunde Bott, Isambard Kingdom Brunel: Family history, 3 February 2012, tracingancestors-uk.com/genealogies-of-the-famous/isambard-kingdom-brunel-family-history; Winifred Mary Brunel Hawes, 26 November 2016, Geni, www.geni.com – both sites accessed 29 November 2017

⁸⁶ Oxford University examinations for women, *Oxfordshire Weekly News*, 22 July 1885, 3

⁸⁷ Sportswoman's page, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 29 December 1900, 685; Cleckum, Golf gossip, *St Andrews Citizen*, 11 February 1899, 3

⁸⁸ Notes from our London correspondent, *Yorkshire Herald*, 27 February 1892, 1; Private Wires, From our London correspondent, *Manchester Courier*, 3 April 1891, 5; The Britannia Roll of the Imperial Federation League, *Penrith Observer*, 2 June 1891, 7. The permanent secretary was known as the Clerk of the Roll.

⁸⁹ Women and imperial federation, *London Daily News*, 9 December 1891, 6

then Grimsby, who was made 1st Baron Heneage of Hainton in 1896.⁹⁰ That same year, Margaret won a three-way election of her own to become England captain, but – after the votes had been counted – Girton College objected that 'at that particular moment [she] was not in any club belonging to the association'. The poll was allowed to stand, however, after Royal Holloway's vice-principal Elizabeth Guinness stepped in to say Heneage would be qualified to play for the college 'the very next day'.⁹¹

The inaugural president

At the head of this organisation of prominent, independently wealthy women was Lilian Faithfull – although she was not first choice for president. That distinction went to Newnham principal Eleanor Sidgwick, perhaps because of the college's central role in bringing about the formation of the AEWHA. Sidgwick declined the invitation, however. She had only taken charge of Newnham in 1892, after the death of founding principal Anne Clough, and was discovering that the 'principal's life was a full one'. Having also taken on the role of bursar, Sidgwick was soon overseeing building work to connect Newnham's halls, and 'kept an eye on everything that happened in the college'.⁹² But a hectic day job may not have been the only reason she refused to head up an unknown quantity such as the AEWHA. In the summer of 1895, Sidgwick's brother Arthur Balfour was made First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the Commons after their uncle, Lord Salisbury, had led the

⁹⁰ Edward Heneage, 1st Baron Heneage – www.thepeerage.com: accessed 16 January 2019

⁹¹ Minutes of the AEWHA special general meeting, 17 November 1896, UoB Archive A/1/1, 19-20. The other inaugural honorary secretaries for which biographical details have yet to be found are: Bouchier (Bedford Ladies), Reid (Somerville), Fletcher (Girton) and Morton (Newnham)

⁹² Alice Gardner, *A short history of Newnham College* (Bowes and Bowes, Cambridge 1921), 24 & 86-88

Conservatives to victory in the general election to become Prime Minister.⁹³

Salisbury's coalition government with the Liberal Unionists included Joseph Chamberlain – Helen's uncle – as Secretary of State for the Colonies.⁹⁴

With no prominent political connections, however, Faithfull emerged to take on the role of first president of the AEWHHA – although her tenure almost came to an end in January 1897, after her leadership was questioned by Christabel Lawrence. Concerned about what she saw as a lack of progress, the honorary secretary wrote to Faithfull complaining that 'so far the AEWHHA had done nothing in the way of initiation, but had only organised existing hockey'. While the letter was 'only intended for her private perusal', Faithfull felt matters raised in it were so grave that she needed to 'ascertain the feeling of the Council'; if members agreed with the letter's sentiment, she would step down.⁹⁵ The Council did not concur with Lawrence's assessment and refused to accept Faithfull's resignation. The honorary secretary did resign, however. After Faithfull had left the meeting, Lawrence told the Council she had taken on extra duties at Wimbledon House School and could not continue as secretary to the AEWHHA unless 'a treasurer could be given her'. It was thought, however, that there would be 'no difficulty in finding someone who could combine the two offices' – so Lawrence surrendered her executive roles, in a scenario perhaps engineered to allow a founder member to bow out gracefully.⁹⁶ Her departure was explained to the broader membership shortly

⁹³ Gov.uk, History: past prime ministers: Arthur James Balfour – www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/arthur-james-balfour: accessed: 15 November 2018; Isobel White & Mary Durkin, General Election dates 1832-2005, House of Commons Library (SN/PC/04512), 15 November 2007

⁹⁴ Peter T Marsh, Chamberlain, Joseph [Joe] (1836-1914), industrialist and politician, *ODNB*, 23 September 2004 – www.oxforddnb.com: accessed 15 November 2018

⁹⁵ Minutes of AEWHHA Council meeting, 12 January 1897, UoB Archive A/1/1, 25-27

⁹⁶ *ibid*

afterwards, at an extraordinary meeting of the AEWHHA. The whole correspondence between Lawrence and Faithfull was read out, and it was agreed that a letter should be sent to the former honorary secretary 'conveying the thanks of the Association to her for past services'. Ethel Robson was then elected in her place.⁹⁷

This vote of confidence in Faithfull indicates one of two things: that members were happy with the way in which the AEWHHA was developing under her leadership or they did not relish finding a third presidential candidate in less than two years – especially as the incumbent had such an obvious enthusiasm for the sport. As a student at Somerville College, she had captained the 1st XI, recalling in her memoirs 'the excitement of the first inter-collegiate hockey match', as well as the 'supper-parties at dead of night in commemoration of a hockey or tennis victory'. After leaving Oxford in 1887, with a first in English literature and language, she lectured for five years at Royal Holloway College, where – again – games were 'the chief distraction' for staff and students, and 'the ninety-five acres belonging to the College gave every opportunity for tennis and hockey'. Faithfull was then appointed vice-principal of the Ladies' Department at King's College, London, where 'the administrative staff were all still young and enjoyed boarding an omnibus with the rest of the hockey eleven and playing in mud and fog under the shadow of the prison at Wormwood Scrubs'.⁹⁸

Kingsian Edith Morley – who, in 1908, would be appointed the first female professor at a British university – credited the college hockey club with

⁹⁷ Minutes of AEWHHA extraordinary meeting, 2 February 1897, UoB Archive A/1/1, 28-29

⁹⁸ Lilian M Faithfull, *In the house of my pilgrimage* (Chatto & Windus, London 1924), 62, 67, 94 & 114

creating a strong sense of belonging to a corporate body. 'I am inclined to think,' she said, 'that the training in sportsmanship in the widest sense... contributed something to our development which girls with our individualistic upbringing could have got in no other way from a non-residential college.' It was certainly an activity strongly encouraged by Faithfull, whose 'method of collecting players resembled her way of obtaining examination candidates', according to Morley.⁹⁹ Anyone who enrolled on a single course of lectures for a whole, or even a half, term became a student at King's – and the cheapest lectures were in divinity. 'Consequently,' Morley recalls, 'prospective hockey players without intellectual leanings were... encouraged to pay for half a term's course of divinity lectures... in order that they would be entitled to rank as students... and therefore to join the hockey club... In this fashion we secured some of our foremost players.'¹⁰⁰ It indicates an impressive dedication to the sport by Faithfull, but manipulating the rules to give your team a better chance of victory was not in keeping with the truly amateur ethos for which the AEWHHA would become known. Albeit a mild infraction, the fact that the governing body's first president was prepared to indulge in such behaviour suggests that the malleable concept of amateurism was not front and centre of the minds of the AEWHHA founders in 1895. Indeed, it would be another six years before the governing body introduced a ruling on the matter – perhaps because they felt no need to spell it out.

⁹⁹ Dyhouse, *No Distinction of Sex?*, 204

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*

Hockey and amateur idealism

As has already been outlined, most of the women involved in the establishment of the AEWHa were alumnae of public schools and university colleges, where games-playing became an integral part of the curricula during the late 19th century. In these institutions, girls and young women developed sporting structures that would have been familiar to their brothers at Eton, Harrow and Rugby, with captains and vice-captains choosing teams, organising fixtures and awarding colours. They also imbibed the same amateur philosophy, summed up by Frances Dove, founder and first headmistress of Wycombe Abbey School, who wrote that games:

provide a splendid field for the development of powers of organisation, of good temper under trying circumstances, courage and determination to play up and do your best, even in a losing game, rapidity of thought and action, judgement and self-reliance, and above all things, unselfishness... learning to sink individual differences in the effort of loyally working with others for the common good.¹⁰¹

Student matches were, nevertheless, competitive affairs; hockey never adopted the 'play day' model for women's sport that emanated from the United States, with its emphasis on participation and cooperation rather than competition, and its slogan 'every girl in a game and a game for every girl'. Constance Appleby, an English physical educationalist credited with introducing hockey into the USA, argued for hockey festivals with intact teams

¹⁰¹ Fletcher, *Women first*, 33

rather than play days, which mixed up girls from different schools and colleges to play together. Later, when the US Field Hockey Association was 'chastised' in *The Sportswoman* for promoting open competition, US international players Dr Helen Krumbhaar and Anne Townsend responded by saying 'competition was healthy and necessary to retain interest in the game'.¹⁰² Indeed, many school and university teams in England played for trophies, and the AEWHF later allowed juvenile competitions on the basis that they 'only encourage friendly rivalry, and possibly promote *esprit de corps*'.¹⁰³ Such contests, it said, were 'a concession to those who have not... reached full development and understanding of the principle "the game for game's sake"'.¹⁰⁴ The HA, however, did not even make concessions for students and believed that hockey would 'continue to flourish on its merits, without any spurious inducements which would only introduce a class of player which it is desirable to avoid'.¹⁰⁵

This concern that playing for tangible rewards would result in hockey being taken up by the wrong sort of people – that is, the lower classes – was not really an issue within the women's game at the turn of the 20th century. Before 1914, the number of working and lower middle-class women playing hockey was negligible. As Catriona Parratt has pointed out, participation in sport by such women was limited by a number of social factors, including family income, occupation, and ideas about propriety.¹⁰⁶ Where they were in

¹⁰² Lynn E Couturier, 'Play with us, not against us': the debate about play days in the regulation of women's sport, *International Journal of the History of Sport* 25:4, March 2008, 422 & 431-32.

Krumbhaar and Townsend would later become IFWHA vice-president and secretary respectively

¹⁰³ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 8 December 1910, 115

¹⁰⁴ C E P, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 10 December 1932, 5

¹⁰⁵ Stanley Christopherson and E L Clapham, *Hockey and lacrosse* (George Routledge & Sons, London 1897), 8

¹⁰⁶ Parratt, *Little means or time*, 22

the family life-cycle was also important, according to Stephen G Jones, with 'young women without domestic responsibilities forming the nucleus of active participants'.¹⁰⁷ Working-class men, however, were able to involve themselves more widely in organised sport and, as outlined in the Introduction, some received 'broken time' payments for doing so. Whether reimbursing working men for lost wages amounted to professionalism was a bone of contention; was it really any different from cricketer W G Grace and other 'gentlemen amateurs' being paid highly questionable 'expenses'? The 20 Yorkshire and Lancashire rugby clubs that gathered at the George Hotel, Huddersfield, in August 1895 – to resign their membership of the RFU and, thereby, precipitate the sport's split into 'union' and 'league' – did not think so. Their new organisation, the Northern Rugby Football Union (NRFU), was established 'on the principle of payment for bona fide broken time only' – and a figure of six shillings per day was set – but it still regarded itself as upholding amateur ideals. The Northern Union remained 'as strongly opposed as ever to professionalism', insisted William Hirst, of founding club Huddersfield, but 'payment of working men players for loss of wages through playing a match was not professionalism'.¹⁰⁸

The FA also remained strongly opposed to professionalism, but opted for pragmatic acceptance of payments to players 'in order to keep the game under gentlemanly control'.¹⁰⁹ It had inadvertently stimulated the commercial appeal of association football by launching a national knock-out cup in the

¹⁰⁷ Stephen G Jones, Working class sport in Manchester between the wars, in Richard Holt (ed), *Sport and the working class in modern Britain* (Manchester University Press, Manchester 1990), 76

¹⁰⁸ Collins, *Rugby's road to 1895*

¹⁰⁹ Tony Mason, Football, in Tony Mason (ed), *Sport in Britain: a social history* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1989), 147

1871-72 season. This injected a greater competitive edge to games and heightened clubs' urge to win, especially against local rivals. It also boosted spectator interest – and, with eager crowds willing to pay to watch, the businessmen who ran many northern and midland clubs were keen to pursue cup glory by attracting the best talent, often with inducements of jobs or cash.¹¹⁰ When the issue of payments to players threatened to split the sport in two, the FA grudgingly allowed professionalism, although it was stringently controlled, with birth and residential conditions imposed on players.¹¹¹ The Football League followed in 1888, when Aston Villa chairman William McGregor decided clubs – and their finances – would benefit from regular scheduled fixtures, rather than ad hoc 'friendlies' of variable quality, which were often cancelled at the last minute. Twelve northern and midlands teams became founder members of this new organisation, the leaders of which acknowledged that the FA remained the sport's overall authority. The chief concern of the League, said McGregor, was the interests of its own clubs, so 'it is best for the whole government of the game to be in the hands of the Football Association'.¹¹² Professional sides operating within the remit of an amateur governing body was not to everybody's taste, however, and a breakaway Amateur Football Association (AFA) was set up 'by the old school men' in 1907.¹¹³ These secessionists wished to redraw the boundaries of a sport that they viewed as 'only suited to the classes, and distinctly not to the masses generally' by 'affiliating only clubs of approved social standing' –

¹¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹¹ Wray Vamplew, *Pay up and play the game: professional sport in Britain 1875-1914* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), 192

¹¹² Taylor, *The Leaguers*, 35

¹¹³ Porter, *Revenge of the Crouch End Vampires*, 415

which, by and large, were based in London and the South East. The AFA's separatist stance was short-lived, however, and it integrated with the FA in 1914.¹¹⁴

The HA was more akin to the AFA than the FA. To stem the extra competitiveness that it believed could lead to hockey's commercialisation and, ultimately, professionalisation, it 'vigorously suppressed all attempts to promote cup or league competitions of any description'. It believed there was already plenty of healthy rivalry between clubs:

a rivalry of a widely different nature to that engendered by cup competitions, and it is to be hoped that we may never see in hockey the evils that have arisen from the institution of such competitions at football. Cup ties eventually lead to professionalism, and this would prove a curse to the game that must be prevented at all costs.¹¹⁵

As with a lot of governing bodies, however, the HA's principled position was not always maintained and members were sometimes left baffled by its decisions on amateurism. Cambridge University, for instance, ran its own leagues, and the Army Association organised a knock-out competition. But 'not for a single moment' did *The Sporting Life* columnist and England international player H R Jordan:

think the officers who control the game in the Army will be guilty of any procedure calculated to cause the Hockey Association's specific rule

¹¹⁴ *ibid*

¹¹⁵ Christopherson and Clapham, *Hockey and lacrosse*, 8

relating to leagues and competitions to be evaded or abused... In the hands of the proper people, I am fully assured we shall see no trouble arising out of the Army Association's competition.¹¹⁶

Trouble had arisen for the HA in November 1895, however, when it was reported that a heated discussion was raging in Birmingham after professional Warwickshire cricketers Willie and Walter Quaife were elected – 'by a small majority' – to play as amateurs for Oriental Hockey Club.¹¹⁷ Ironically, W. G. Grace was consulted about the probity of such a move, although it is not clear by whom. The all-round cricketer had just enjoyed his most successful season with Gloucestershire, claiming his 100th First Class century en route to becoming the first batsman to score 1,000 runs before the end of May.¹¹⁸ To mark the occasion, a testimonial fund had been organised, which earned the 'gentleman amateur' almost £9,000.¹¹⁹ Perhaps unsurprisingly, his response to the Quaife brothers conundrum was: 'Professional cricketers play football with amateur teams and why should they not play hockey?'¹²⁰ *The Sporting Life* columnist Old Blue, however, was not convinced the new Oriental members would be allowed to pick up a stick. 'Matters,' he reported, 'have now been referred to the Hockey Association and, on the face of it, one answer only can be expected – *an emphatic No!*'¹²¹ The next day, however, it was

¹¹⁶ H R Jordan, Hockey notes and news, *The Sporting Life*, 10 February 1909, 1

¹¹⁷ Professional cricketers and hockey, *The Sporting Life*, 30 November 1895, 8

¹¹⁸ Martin Williamson, Cricket's most exclusive club, *cricinfo*, 5 May 2012 –

www.espncricinfo.com/magazine/content/story/563753.html: accessed 13 May 2019

¹¹⁹ Ric Sissons, *The players: a social history of the professional cricketer* (Kingswood Press, London 1988), 157

¹²⁰ Professional cricketers and hockey, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 5 December 1895, 10

¹²¹ Old Blue, Men and matters in the world of sport, *The Sporting Life*, 4 December 1895, 6. Original emphasis

announced that the HA had cleared the Quaifes to play – much to Old Blue's astonishment:

If a man elects to play as an amateur in one department of sport, or vice versa, surely his status *should apply to every other branch thereof also?* Otherwise confusion worse confounded will ensue – in fact, he must be a veritable Solomon who can tell exactly where we are now in this respect... how a *professional* cricketer can pose as an *amateur* hockeyist is altogether beyond my ken.¹²²

It was a conundrum that didn't particularly trouble the embryonic AEWHHA, as there were few sports from which late-Victorian women could earn money, let alone a living. Tennis players, golfers and archers – all wealthy women to begin with – could come away from competitions with 'valuable trophies, cups and trinkets', but that didn't mean they regarded themselves as professional athletes. Alice Legh, for example won 23 national archery titles between 1881 and 1922, earning cash, equipment and jewellery, but considered herself an amateur because she paid to enter contests.¹²³

Tangible rewards for prowess in another sport do not appear to have been a bar to selection for AEWHHA representative teams, either. Lottie Dod lifted the Wimbledon singles title five times between 1887 and 1893, and was a champion golfer, as well as a medal-winning archer – but she also played hockey for England in 1899 and 1900.¹²⁴ She did not feature again, however,

¹²² Old Blue, Men and matters in the world of sport, *The Sporting Life*, 11 December 1895, 6. Original emphasis

¹²³ Williams, *A contemporary history of women's sport*, 72

¹²⁴ Jeremy Malies, Dod, Charlotte [Lottie] (1871-1960), sportswoman, *ODNB*, 23 September 2004 – www.oxforddnb.com: accessed 19 November 2018

prone as she was 'to give up a sport after she felt that she had mastered it, mainly to avoid being seen as a "pot hunter"'.¹²⁵ And it was the parameters of pot hunting, rather than of professionalism per se, that the AEWHA first enshrined in its regulations – although not until 1899.

Despite coming into being at the same time as rugby football was being rent asunder by payments to players, the hypocrisy of 'shamateurism' was being magnified by the exploits of W G Grace, and the HA was tying itself in knots about the transferability of a person's professional status from one sport to another, the AEWHA did not initially seek to define an amateur. Nor did it explicitly ban members from playing for trophies. Given that most early affiliates were upper middle-class, independently wealthy and largely university educated, it may have believed such moves were unnecessary. The governing body was forced to reconsider its position by the turn of the century, however – although not for the reasons seen in other sports, and only by the narrowest of margins.

Cups and competitions

Playing for trophies appears to have become an issue for the AEWHA at the end of the 1898 season, when *The Ladies' Field* magazine offered it a cup 'to the value of 20 guineas to be competed for annually at the discretion of the association'. Although it allowed affiliates to play for silverware – having declined, in 1895, to follow the HA's stance on the issue – there appears to have been some disquiet among the governing body about sanctioning a cup competition for the entire AEWHA. President Lilian Faithfull now proposed

¹²⁵ Williams, *A contemporary history of women's sport*, 73

adopting the men's Rule 12, which banned affiliated clubs and associations from playing for trophies. It was pointed out, however, that this would 'preclude the ladies' colleges from competing for their cups and would probably lead them to leave the association'. So it was agreed – perhaps to avoid having to address a thorny issue – that the offer of a cup from *The Ladies' Field* would be declined. Later in the same meeting, a proposal for another trophy was scratched at the last minute. Marian Montagu, of London-based St Quintin's, had asked that an AEWHA committee choose 15 or more first-class clubs to play against each other every year, 'the champion club to receive a shield at the end of the season'. In essence, she was asking for a league with a championship trophy. Having heard the debate over *The Ladies' Field* cup, however, Montagu requested that the second part of the motion be withdrawn. Her idea was still overwhelmingly rejected, however, indicating that many members of the governing body were uncomfortable with the idea of clubs not being able to handpick their opponents.¹²⁶

Having failed to interest the AEWHA in its cup, *The Ladies' Field* adopted a different tack at the start of the 1898-99 season, offering a trophy to the club with 'the most successful record of matches... that is voluntarily sent into us'.¹²⁷ It prompted the governing body's Council to fire off a letter to the magazine stating that it 'intended warning all their [sic] clubs that any club competing for any challenge cup would be struck off the rolls of the Association'.¹²⁸ 'Somewhat astonished' at the contents and tone of the AEWHA's letter, the editor responded:

¹²⁶ Minutes of AEWHA special general meeting, 29 April 1898, UoB Archive A/1/1, 57-58 & 61-62

¹²⁷ Letter from the editor of *The Ladies' Field* to the AEWHA, 22 December 1898, attached to the minutes of AEWHA Council meeting, 12 January 1899, UoB Archive A/1/1, 83

¹²⁸ Minutes of AEWHA special council meeting, 15 December 1898, UoB Archive A/1/1, 79

No doubt those clubs on your rolls will be aware of your wishes, though no rule with regard to challenge cups or even prizes appears in the edition of your rules for 1898... We did offer a challenge cup to your association last season for County matches, but merely received a thanks with the intimation that you did not wish a cup for that competition coupled with no declaration whatever on the subject of cups in general.¹²⁹

That the AEWHHA was intending to warn its clubs against entering for cup competitions suggests it hadn't committed a written ruling to its regulations. In April 1899, however, members began discussing an amendment to what it referred to as Rule 11 (A). It was proposed that:

No affiliated association and no club belonging to the AEWHHA or to any affiliated association shall institute or take part in any hockey challenge cup or prize competition; and any affiliated association or club so offending shall be dealt with by the council under Rule 12. Exception shall be made in favour of such inter-college cups as already exist.¹³⁰

This was defeated by 15 votes to three, however. A second amendment sought to extend the ban to individual players and members, and make exceptions in favour of university, college, school and house cups, as well as

¹²⁹ Letter from the editor of *The Ladies' Field* to the AEWHHA, 22 December 1898, minutes of AEWHHA Council meeting, 12 January 1899, 83

¹³⁰ Minutes of AEWHHA special general meeting, 28 April 1899, UoB Archive A/1/1, 91

'all cups which at the time of passing this rule are in possession of clubs'. Again, this suggests AEWHHA members were unaware that they should not be playing for trophies; indeed, Bedford explained that 'in their locality, where matches are difficult to arrange and clubs far apart, the only incentive was the playing for the monthly cup, and were they deprived of this stimulus, the keenness of the members would diminish'. East Molesey's Emily Johnson, however, said 'the only reward sought for [sic] should be in maintaining the standard of play and a position in the 1st XI' – even though, as a top-class tennis player, she would have regularly competed for prizes with a racquet.¹³¹

The proposed exceptions were each separately put to the vote, with the first four passed with no-one objecting. Number five, concerning cups already in the possession of clubs, also found favour with the majority of delegates, seven to five – but, under AEWHHA rules, two-thirds of a meeting had to support a motion for it to be passed, so this exception never made it into the rule book.¹³² For the sake of one vote in favour, women's hockey outside of educational institutions in England became a trophy- and competition-free zone – officially, at least. It was not the same stance taken by the Irish Ladies Hockey Union, which did sanction senior and junior badge competitions, plus an Irish Senior Cup.¹³³ By 1903, it had even instigated an All Ireland Cup competition for 'the best teams from each province', with matches played in Dublin before the close of the season.¹³⁴ Nor had the AEWHHA taken its lead from the HA, which – theoretically, at least – did not make exceptions for student competitions. Instead, its democratic processes had resulted in a

¹³¹ *ibid*, 91-94

¹³² Minutes of AEWHHA special general meeting, 28 April 1899, UoB Archive A/1/1, 94

¹³³ Hockey: Irish Ladies Hockey Union, *Weekly Irish Times*, 9 March 1901, 14

¹³⁴ Hockey: Belvoir v Holywood, *Belfast Newsletter*, 20 March 1903, 5

'halfway house' solution that was not supported by the majority of members and which, in the century to come, would open the AEWHHA up to charges of hypocrisy.

'Gates' and going public

That the governing body didn't legislate against competitions until four years after its foundation – and didn't initially fear that playing for trophies was a first step towards professionalism – may have been because other elements that could have turned women's hockey into a commercial affair were absent or being kept in check – often after prolonged negotiation between members that, inevitably, left some sections of the association dissatisfied. For a start, the AEWHHA virtually handpicked its membership, with clubs proposed and seconded by existing members before they could affiliate. To encourage participation initially, the committee was given the power to elect clubs during the 1895/96 season; thereafter, nominations boosted the membership to 144 clubs by 1901, almost four times as many as the HA had managed to attract in its first six years.¹³⁵ Some of these affiliates believed hockey was 'merely a means of exercise for the players' and, as such, did not concern the public, while others considered spectators – and publicity – vital to its continued growth. England international (Alice) Mabel Pickering, for example, argued that 'the game would never gain many recruits' without exposure in the press, and 'if it is to become an institution, and an element in the education of women, it must be kept before the public'. Surely, she added, 'the interest and

¹³⁵ Minutes of the LHA AGM, 23 November 1895, UoB Archive A/1/1, 4; Tomkins & Ward, *The century makers*, 60

presence of a crowd can never, in ladies' hockey in all events, prove the "thin edge of the wedge" of professionalism'.¹³⁶ With an eye on building up its coffers to help cover the costs involved in hosting international teams, the AEWHHA was not opposed to encouraging spectators and collecting gate receipts for representative matches. It was forced to tread a fine line, however, to keep its more conservative members on board.

The issue first raised its head in February 1897, during preparations for the inaugural home international against Ireland. Columbine's Ruth Sparrow proposed that entry for spectators should be by ticket only, with no payment on the door. It was eventually decided, however, that AEWHHA members would be admitted free, while ladies' tickets would be one shilling in advance (3s 6d on the gate), and gentlemen's tickets 2s 6d (5s on the day).¹³⁷ That male spectators 'had to pay a high price for the privilege of being present' caused some comment in the press. 'Imagine,' said *The Globe*, 'if the conditions were reversed, and a special fee were exacted from lady spectators at a cricket match.' Not that the London-based newspaper was suggesting the AEWHHA should encourage spectators – of either sex. While it had 'no wish to discourage ladies from playing', it wanted to point out that 'the indiscriminate admission of the public to witness their efforts is anything but desirable, as anyone who attended the exhibition matches of the Lady Footballers in former seasons will readily admit'.¹³⁸

This was a reference to the aforementioned British Ladies Football Club set up by Nettie Honeyball and Lady Florence Dixie in late 1894. The club

¹³⁶ A Mabel Pickering, Hockey in the Midlands, *The Hockey Field*, 17 October 1901, 4

¹³⁷ Minutes of AEWHHA extraordinary meeting, 2 February 1897, UoB Archive A/1/1, 30-31

¹³⁸ 'Gates' at ladies games, *The Globe*, 8 March 1897, 1

toured the country, playing games in front of paying spectators, and attracted much attention – as well as ‘mean-spirited and sarcastic’ comments – from the press. Reporters took the players to task for everything from their knowledge of the game and skill levels to their physical appearance and the ‘rational dress’ they wore. Some defended the women’s right to take to the field, but the general opinion of females playing football was the one voiced by *The Sketch*: ‘As a means of exercise in a back garden it is not to be commended; as a public entertainment it is to be deplored.’¹³⁹ The BLFC had played in front of a large crowd at Preston Park, Brighton, on 6 April 1895 – the same day Alexandra College were being entertained at Roedean, and just four days before the tea-shop meeting to set up the AEWHA.¹⁴⁰ It is possible that the anger, scorn, ridicule and laughter that Honeyball and her club-mates endured wherever they went was not lost on some early members of the hockey association and heightened their concern about inviting public ridicule.¹⁴¹ This concern may have been more imagined than real, as *The Sketch* – so scathing of women’s football – reported positively on Alexandra College’s tour of England. The Dublin side’s return match against Newnham College was said to be ‘a well-contested match... the play on both sides was good and Cambridge gave the Alexandrians plenty of work’. While the tourists were described as ‘formidable opponents’, the inevitable focus on their appearance emphasised the feminine: ‘Tall and comely, for the most part, they looked very neat and charming in their white cotton shirts and black skirts, the dullness of which was relieved by their cerise-coloured caps, ties and ribbon crosses over

¹³⁹ James F Lee, *The lady footballers and the British press, 1895*, *Critical Survey* 24:1 Sporting Victorians (2012), 91

¹⁴⁰ The ladies football match, *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 12 April 1895, 7

¹⁴¹ Lee, *The lady footballers and the British press*, 93

the left shoulder.'¹⁴² There was also positive coverage of England v Ireland at Blackheath. *The Leeds Times* – which included in its report an 'action' sketch and drawings of the rival captains – noted that: 'After an exhilarating encounter, in which some splendid runs were made, the game ended in a draw. The athletic prowess of these ladies won general admiration. Needless to say, there was a large attendance of spectators and plenty of cheering.'¹⁴³

It was the presence of an unregulated crowd, however, that AEWHHA founding members Royal Holloway College and The Crofts deemed unacceptable. At a special general meeting held shortly after the match, they proposed that funds for future international occasions 'should be met by increased subs, or by a special sub, rather than by taking gate money'. There followed a lengthy debate, during which Lilian Faithfull made it clear she was 'against hampering the Association'. An amendment to stop 'the unchecked sale of tickets' was defeated by 12 votes to 5, but a proposal to ban advertising of games 'by posters, in public places or in newspapers' was passed by 13 votes to 4. Finally, it was agreed that the AEWHHA was justified in the arrangements made for the previous month's international, but 'in consideration of the exception taken by two clubs to certain details, these... will be reconsidered at a subsequent period'.¹⁴⁴

In the run-up to the Blackheath international, at a meeting attended by Royal Holloway and Crofts, the AEWHHA had given permission for *Hearth & Home* to write about the origins of the association – although the article had to be submitted to Lilian Faithfull for approval before publication. The magazine

¹⁴² The world of sport: hockey, *The Sketch*, 24 April 1895, 701

¹⁴³ Our artist correspondent, London week by week, *Leeds Times*, 6 March 1897, 3

¹⁴⁴ Minutes of AEWHHA special general meeting, 2 April 1897, UoB Archive A/1/1, 39-40

was also allowed to take photographs of the international teams, so the governing body was not averse to generating press interest in its matches. Banning the promotion of future games, however, was perhaps a way of satisfying those who wanted greater control over potential spectators, while ensuring the annual fixture still generated an income – albeit from a more select crowd.¹⁴⁵ The topic reared its head again in September 1898, however. After voting down an idea to play Ireland on a Saturday – a suggestion presumably designed to attract bigger crowds – the general meeting was told some clubs were still anxious that no money should be taken at the door. It was pointed out that this 'would seriously hamper busy people, whose time was not their own', and it was agreed (six votes to two) that: tickets could be obtained by members free, beforehand, from secretaries of clubs; non-members would pay 1s before the day and 2s 6d at the gate – and the price would be the same for women and men.¹⁴⁶

This latter clause would have satisfied *The Globe's* demand for equality, and it indicates that the majority of AEWhA members were comfortable with either sex watching the international matches and did not wish to legislate men away from the touchline. The new wording did not appease Royal Holloway or The Crofts, however, and they rallied support from the Oxbridge colleges and Wimbledon over the issue of unrestricted gates. With the clubs threatening to withdraw from the AEWhA, 'the question was fully discussed' again two months later. Finally, affiliates unanimously agreed that non-members could only obtain tickets beforehand if their applications were accompanied by a

¹⁴⁵ Minutes of AEWhA extraordinary meeting, 2 February 1897, UoB Archive A/1/1, 29

¹⁴⁶ Minutes of AEWhA AGM, 8 September 1898, UoB Archive A/1/1, 68

member's card – and they could only get a ticket at the gate if they were accompanied by a ticket-holder or could produce the card of an AEWHHA member. The admission price for men and women remained the same.¹⁴⁷

PR and promotion

One issue around which the AEWHHA did unite was press relations, which came up for discussion at the end of the 1898 season. The governing body had received a letter on the subject of 'journalism' from a Mrs Givan – a regular writer on the sport – who 'set forth certain matters of procedure to be adopted for the future'.¹⁴⁸ What these procedural matters were is not outlined in the minutes, but the AEWHHA was not prepared to meet them. While acknowledging that Mrs Givan had, at the outset, 'done the game great service in writing it up', Elizabeth Guinness, of Royal Holloway College, said 'such a necessity did not now exist', as the sport 'was in a most flourishing condition'. She proposed that Mrs Givan 'be deprived of her present position with regard to women's hockey', and that 'the Association take no further steps to facilitate particular journalists in writing about women's hockey'. This was carried unanimously. Such a decision could be interpreted as the AEWHHA choosing not to give preferential access to a specific reporter and, instead, throwing open its thriving sport to whichever newspaper or magazine wished to cover it. East Molesey's Emily Johnson, however, told the meeting she had 'made arrangements with the *Ladies' Field*, with a view to hockey reporting', so it

¹⁴⁷ Minutes of AEWHHA Council meeting, 4 November 1898, UoB Archive A/1/1, 72-73

¹⁴⁸ Minutes of AEWHHA special general meeting, 29 April 1898, UoB Archive A/1/1, 56

seems the governing body was more intent on bringing its PR in-house and taking control of its communications.¹⁴⁹

At the end of the 1900/01 season, student member Edith Thompson suggested a logical extension of this when she offered to launch a women's hockey paper. Thompson had already impressed Lilian Faithfull during her time at King's College, the vice-principal describing her as a 'natural leader', with 'a magic touch which ensures success to all she undertakes'.¹⁵⁰ So it was perhaps no surprise that the AEWHHA agreed that if she could 'carry out her scheme, the Association would adopt the paper as their official organ instead of the present *Hockey* [the HA's official magazine], which was unanimously declared most unsatisfactory'.¹⁵¹ Living up to Faithfull's character reference, Thompson launched the first issue of *The Hockey Field* in October 1901 and remained as its editor until after World War One, when she handed over the reins to sports journalist Eustace E White.¹⁵² Official AEWHHA notices were published in the magazine 'exactly as they are received, and are given precedence of [sic] other matter', while editorial pronouncements 'adhered strictly to the policy of the Association'. Beyond that, Thompson assured the magazine's readers, 'the AEWHHA has no control whatever'.¹⁵³ Generally, though, *The Hockey Field* could be relied upon not to say anything too controversial.

So it was that through controlled membership, restricted gates, regulated publicity and, eventually, a ban on cups and competitions the

¹⁴⁹ *ibid*, 56-58

¹⁵⁰ Faithfull, *In the house of my pilgrimage*, 109

¹⁵¹ Minutes of AEWHHA special general meeting, 26 April 1901, UoB Archive A/1/1, 145

¹⁵² Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 9

¹⁵³ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 12 January 1911, 195. *The Hockey Field* continued to be published, under various names, until the late 1960s

AEWHA – not always unanimously – sought to maintain the sport's unity and integrity as it expanded across England. These measures were not introduced specifically to ward off professionalism, but – collectively – they limited the potential for hockey's commercialisation. Five years to the day after its first annual meeting, however, the AEWHA was finally prompted to answer the question: 'What is an amateur?'

'The professional difficulty'

The issue surfaced at the AGM in October 1900, when 'the position of qualified coaches with regard to match play was brought forward'. Secretary Ethel Robson had taken advice from a 'gentleman player' – possibly her brother, Philip – who told her that a paid coach in the men's game would be regarded as a professional and excluded from playing with amateurs. The women, however, felt that this position was not 'quite final', and that being paid to coach was not the same as being paid to play. Their discussion centred on an instructor's sex, their standard of qualification and the amount charged, with one club stating they had 'paid as much as 10s 6d an hour for a coach'.¹⁵⁴

It would have been problematic for the AEWHA and its plans for expansion to follow the men's interpretation of amateurism on this matter. This is because 'physical education specialist' had emerged as a distinct career choice for women by the end of the 19th century, becoming a recognised branch of teaching – a profession already dominated by females. Of the 230,345 teachers (including university lecturers) listed in the 1901 England

¹⁵⁴ Minutes of AEWHA AGM, 9 October 1900, UoB Archive A/1/1, 131

and Wales census, 172,000, or 75 per cent, were women.¹⁵⁵ Three physical education training colleges for women – Dartford (formerly Hampstead, 1895), Anstey (1897) and Chelsea (1898) – were already in existence, while IM Marsh opened in 1900 and Bedford three years later.¹⁵⁶ Many of the AEHWA's members would have earned a living, in part at least, from teaching or coaching hockey in schools and colleges – possibly even with their clubs. By the HA's definition, therefore, they would be ineligible to play in an amateur team sport.

Unable to agree on the best way forward, the AGM decided that 'the professional difficulty' should be postponed until the next Council meeting, on 23 November 1900. By then, however, the issue of what constituted a professional hockey player had been raised in two letters to the AEHWA – one from Crouch End player Mary Hankinson and the other from Nicholas Lane Jackson, 'the well-known Association Football player'.¹⁵⁷ 'Pa' Jackson, as he was known, had recently stepped down after 17 years as honorary secretary of Corinthians, a football club he set up in 1882 that became symbolic of the amateur game once professionalism had been sanctioned by the FA. He had also been vice-president of English football's governing body, but resigned in 1894 because of what he saw as its unnecessary restrictions on 'scratch' amateur teams playing exhibition matches for charity. Having all but given up on football by the end of the 19th century, Jackson – a journalist by profession – busied himself with other sports, including tennis and golf. It is unclear, however, why he suddenly felt compelled to interest himself in the amateur

¹⁵⁵ T R Gourvish, The rise of professions, in T R Gourvish and Alan O'Day (eds), *Later Victorian Britain 1876-1900* (Macmillan, Basingstoke 1990), 22

¹⁵⁶ Fletcher, *Women first*, 40

¹⁵⁷ Minutes of AEHWA Council meeting, 23 November 1900, UoB Archive A/1/1, 134

credentials of the women's hockey association.¹⁵⁸ Hankinson, on the other hand, had graduated from Madame Österberg's Dartford Physical Training College in 1898, so had a vested interest in asking the AEWHa to clarify the amateur status of games mistresses.¹⁵⁹ Her club, Crouch End, were also in their first season of membership – having been elected in May 1900 – so this was perhaps her earliest opportunity to broach the subject.¹⁶⁰

It has yet to be established whether Hankinson and Jackson were working in tandem or submitted their letters independently of each other, but their correspondence – and the debate at the previous month's AGM – spurred the AEWHa Council into action. After another (unminuted) discussion, it decided that 'all difficulties would be met if the Association were to define the term "amateur" as follows: "An amateur is one who does not play for money."' It was agreed that this would be inserted in the regulations as a footnote after Rule 1.¹⁶¹ The AEWHa later admitted that its definition was 'broad and purposely so', to allow those who profited from the game in ways other than by actually playing to do so.¹⁶² Unlike in other sports, therefore, the motivation for defining an amateur in women's hockey was not to exclude a particular social class, but to legitimise and accommodate the wider economic and commercial interests of its members. For while take-up of hockey by significant numbers of lower-class women was still some way off, the sport's popularity among the higher echelons of late-Victorian and Edwardian society meant it

¹⁵⁸ M A Bryant, Jackson, Nicholas Lane [called Pa Jackson] (1849-1937), sports administrator, *ODNB*, 23 September 2004 – www.oxforddnb.com: accessed 1 December 2018

¹⁵⁹ Jane Claydon, Madame's Pioneers: Mary Hankinson, 11 November 2015 – bergmanosterbergunion.org.uk: accessed 1 December 2018

¹⁶⁰ Minutes of AEWHa special general meeting, 23 May 1900, UoB Archive A/1/1, 127

¹⁶¹ Minutes of AEWHa Council meeting, 23 November 1900, UoB Archive A/1/1, 134

¹⁶² Anon, All England WHA: amateur status, *The Hockey Field*, 25 January 1936, 9

couldn't help but develop a 'business' side. 'The enthusiasm of the fair sex for [hockey] amounts to something akin to a devotion,' observed the *Norfolk News* in 1905.¹⁶³ Even Queen Victoria's daughters, daughters-in-law, granddaughters, and ladies of the Royal household were reported to be enthusiasts – 'and many of them are skilled players.'¹⁶⁴ Indeed, Princess Beatrice had 'got up a ladies' hockey team at Windsor', where Ruby Churchill and her sister, Beryl, were among the players. Despite being 'a somewhat rougher game', it was predicted that hockey was set to rival golf as a favourite amusement for ladies.¹⁶⁵

This was not good news for teachers of dance and calisthenics. 'The modern girl is too firmly wedded to her hockey' to be bothered with deportment lessons any more, bemoaned one, who – seeing a chance to pitch for work while simultaneously fearing for her livelihood – warned: 'It will take 20 years of devotion to the minuet to remedy the mischief already done and bring back... the graceful girlhood of the past.'¹⁶⁶ Others, however, saw only opportunities in the hockey craze, including the inventors of a new parlour game – 'Hocker-ball'. Sounding not unlike a forerunner of the football bestseller Subbuteo, Hocker-ball could be played by four, six or eight people, seated around a dining table 'divided into courts marked out by tapes on a green cloth', with a goal and goalkeeper at either end. Each player held a miniature hockey stick – painted either red or blue – between their thumb and forefinger, and the aim was to drive a cork-and-rubber ball into the goals.

¹⁶³ Hockey: Norfolk v Cambridgeshire, *Norfolk News*, 4 February 1905, 7

¹⁶⁴ The woman's world, *Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser*, 13 October 1899, 7

¹⁶⁵ The world of women, *Bury and Norwich Post*, 20 March 1900, 2. Ruby and Beryl were the daughters of Lord Edward Spencer-Churchill, son of the sixth Duke of Marlborough

¹⁶⁶ Eola C Sperring, The modern girl, *London Evening Standard*, 1 April 1905, 2; Advert, *London Evening Standard*, 7 April 1905, 1

According to the *Daily Express*, the game was designed 'to take the place of ping-pong, which is on the decline'.¹⁶⁷

AEWHA members, too, were starting to develop commercial interests from their sport. Aside from Edith Thompson's paid-for, weekly magazine *The Hockey Field*, England international Mabel Pickering had an eponymous range of hockey sticks – which may explain why she was so keen for the game to 'be kept before the public'.¹⁶⁸ Others, including a 'Miss E. W., Clarence House, Roehampton' and a 'Miss A. C., Calke Abbey, Derby', were said to have endorsed sticks, although it is not clear whether they were paid to do so.¹⁶⁹

Such business-minded women were indicative of wider societal changes taking place in Britain in the first decade of the 20th century. Many more middle-class females were being educated to secondary, if not tertiary, level and – as a result – were choosing to be active in the workplace and in public life. By the end of Queen Victoria's reign, a few pioneers had become physicians and surgeons (212), dentists (140), architects (six), accountants (two) and vets (three), while nursing and midwifery – like teaching – were female-dominated professions.¹⁷⁰ Local government service was also deemed 'appropriate activity for women', and the number of women clerks rose from 2,000 (two per cent of the total) in 1851 to 166,000 (20%) in 1911.¹⁷¹ In addition, the retail sector – particularly the new, large department stores – offered reasonably paid, respectable work. Increased employment opportunities made it economically viable for single women to live outside of

¹⁶⁷ Brighton chit-chat, *Brighton Gazette*, 17 October 1903, 6

¹⁶⁸ Advert, Important notice to all hockey players, *The Hockey Field*, 27 October 1904, 18

¹⁶⁹ Advert, The Pickering Bulger hockey stick, *The Hockey Field*, 27 October 1904, 1

¹⁷⁰ Gourvish, *The rise of professions*, 23

¹⁷¹ Sue Bruley, *Women In Britain since 1900* (Macmillan, Basingstoke 1999) 25 & 20

family structures and to create independent lives. Like Viola in Vita Sackville-West's novel *The Edwardians* – which wittily portrays the changing class and gender dynamics of the time – they could become one of those girls who 'defy their own mothers and go off to live by themselves in London'.¹⁷² Viewed largely as an object of pity during the 19th century, the single woman was achieving rising credibility in the 20th and developing a more satisfying public role.¹⁷³

From 1907, female ratepayers, whether single or married, were eligible to run for election to borough and county councils – and many of them did so, including Susan Smee, the AEWHA's vice-president in 1904.¹⁷⁴ She was the first woman to be elected to Acton Council, taking up office in 1912 and becoming the area's first woman mayor in 1924. She later became Acton's first female magistrate, at the Sessions Court in Winchester Road.¹⁷⁵ Hope Cozens-Hardy (as Mrs Pilkington) also became a Justice of the Peace, in Lancashire in March 1920, just months after the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act made it possible for women to take up the role.¹⁷⁶ Also post-war, *The Hockey Field* founder and future AEWHA president Edith Thompson was elected to Aldeburgh Town Council.¹⁷⁷ Her predecessor Frances Heron-Maxwell was less successful, however, when she stood as an independent candidate for election to Kent County Council in 1919. The AEWHA president (1912-22) 'did not receive the support it was anticipated she would do', and

¹⁷² Vita Sackville-West, *The Edwardians* (Virago Press, London 1983), 308

¹⁷³ Bruley, *Women in Britain since 1900*, 14-15

¹⁷⁴ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 47

¹⁷⁵ Dr Jonathan Oates, Who was Susan Smee?, *Ealing News Extra*, 16 November 2015, <http://ealingnewsextra.co.uk/history/who-was-susan-smee/> - accessed: 6 May 2018

¹⁷⁶ Christopher, In town and out, *The Tatler*, 31 March 1920, 420

¹⁷⁷ Jean Williams, Thompson, Edith Marie (1877-1961), sports and empire settlement administrator, *ODNB*, 24 May 2012 – www.oxforddnb.com: accessed 7 January 2019

she finished third of three candidates.¹⁷⁸ Clara Rackham (nee Tabor) was elected to Cambridge Town Council, though, in 1919¹⁷⁹ and sworn in as a magistrate the following year. Although it is unclear to what extent she continued to be involved in hockey after her marriage to university tutor Harris Rackham in 1901, Clara was a prominent suffragist, working as Millicent Fawcett's 'right-hand woman' in the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS).¹⁸⁰

Heron-Maxwell was also an active campaigner for women's suffrage. In 1893, while living in Scotland, she organised a meeting of the radical Women's Emancipation Union – set up by Elizabeth Wolstenholme Emly – and later joined the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage (which would become a constituent member of the NUWSS).¹⁸¹ After moving to Kent in around 1901, she helped establish the Sevenoaks branch of the Women's Liberal Federation (WLF), which aimed to influence, from within, the Liberal Party's policy agenda.¹⁸² Eva McLaren, a close friend of Heron-Maxwell, was its national organiser and honorary treasurer, and the pair travelled around Britain addressing Liberal meetings and proposing motions for furthering the cause. In 1908, they joined forces with Marie Corbett to form the Forward Suffrage Union (FSU), which aimed to concentrate the WLF's suffrage efforts

¹⁷⁸ County council elections: results of polling, *Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser*, 14 March 1919, 3. The result was Philip Champion (NFU) 638, Mr S Coote (Labour) 474. F Heron-Maxwell (no affiliation) 256

¹⁷⁹ Municipal elections, *Cambridge Independent Press*, 7 November 1919, 10. Clara Rackham (Labour) defeated the Conservative candidate Roger Songer in the West Chesterton ward by 316 votes to 219

¹⁸⁰ Professor Mary Joanou, quoted in Clara Rackham: blue plaque for Millicent Fawcett's right-hand woman, BBC Cambridgeshire news, 20 November 2018 – www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-46232781; accessed 21 January 2019

¹⁸¹ Crawford, *The women's suffrage movement*, 398

¹⁸² Lady Liberals, *Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser*, 24 October 1902, 4

and challenge decisions that it saw as unhelpful.¹⁸³ In June 1908, for example – after the parent body's executive committee decided not to recognise the Women's Sunday March – the FSU took its own banners and following to Hyde Park to join the 250,000-strong parade demanding votes for women.¹⁸⁴

While Rackham and Heron-Maxwell believed suffrage would be delivered through constitutional means, Crouch End's Mary Hankinson was a member of one of the militant societies – the Women's Freedom League – and 'a very active suffragette'. Her brother Frederick, meanwhile, was Unitarian chaplain to Holloway prison and was used by Christabel Pankhurst to pass information to and from suffragette prisoners. Hankinson later became president of the Gymnastic Teachers' Suffrage Society and was a member of the socialist Fabian Society. It hired her to teach Swedish drill and country dancing at the first Fabian Summer School in 1907 and, thereafter, she managed the event until 1938.¹⁸⁵ Fellow Fabian and playwright George Bernard Shaw modelled his Saint Joan on Hankinson – the 'physically vigorous, well-disciplined and seemingly sexless host of the Fabian Summer schools' who challenged the status quo.¹⁸⁶

Such redefining of what it meant to be female in Edwardian Britain – which the AEWHF contributed to by its mere existence, regardless of the actions of individual members – fanned a general nervousness among the ruling classes about the way society was changing in the first decade of the

¹⁸³ Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 398-99; Agnes Grove, Liberal women and the suffrage, letter to the *Yorkshire Post*, 17 November 1908, 4

¹⁸⁴ Agnes Grove, Correspondence, *Morning Post*, 13 June 1908, 6

¹⁸⁵ Elizabeth Crawford, The Fabian stained-glass panel and its suffrage connections, 25 September 2017, Woman and her sphere – <https://womanandhersphere.com/tag/mary-hankinson/>: accessed: 13 May 2019

¹⁸⁶ Joley Wood, Introduction to George Bernard Shaw, *Saint Joan: a chronicle play in six scenes and an epilogue* (Penguin Books, London 2001), xi

20th century. In addition to women's suffrage campaigners, working people and the unemployed were finding their political voices thanks to unions and the fledgling Labour Party. Portents of this had been seen two decades earlier, in the Bloody Sunday demonstration of 1887, and subsequent strikes by London dockers and the so-called Match Girls. From 1901, the number of days lost to strike action increased, averaging five million a year until 1910, when it almost doubled, before hitting 36 million in 1912.¹⁸⁷ The lower classes were also gaining greater access to schooling thanks to the 1902 Education Act, which handed responsibility for secondary education to county council committees. For relatively low fees, lower middle-class children could hope to be educated beyond elementary level, while even the least prosperous might stake a claim for free tuition or secure a maintenance grant by sitting a 10-plus exam.¹⁸⁸

Improving the educational opportunities, living conditions and welfare of England's poorest people was a cause taken up by many upper-middle class women at this time, including – as mentioned – AEWHA members such as Margaret Tabor, Hannah Cohen and Sydney Renée Courtauld. They acted as school board and care committee members, sanitary and factory inspectors, and Poor Law Guardians in workhouses. They also got involved in social work through the university settlement movement. Some positions were voluntary, while others were paid, elected or appointed.¹⁸⁹ Many AEWHA members also drew on their love of hockey to encourage healthy recreation

¹⁸⁷ David Brooks, *The age of upheaval* (Manchester University Press, Manchester 1995), 158

¹⁸⁸ L C B Seaman, *Post-Victorian Britain 1902-1951* (Routledge, London, 1991) 13

¹⁸⁹ Susie Steinbach, *Women in England 1760-1914: a social history*, (Phoenix, London 2005), 70

among the lower-classes, offering coaching and setting up clubs for working girls and women.

Broadening the reach of hockey

The Hockey Field was supportive of its readers doing this type of charity work, believing that 'most girls among the well-to-do classes... have a desire to do something for their poorer neighbours'. It also considered the running of such clubs to be a good fit with their talents and personalities; in a none-too-flattering critique of the AEWH's members, the magazine's editorial insisted that many:

are without the necessary tact or 'knack' which makes good district visitors, Sunday school teachers, club helpers, etc; some can neither sing, draw, paint, nor play the piano, and consequently feel useless and in the way in such positions. Here, then, is another opening for them: let them organise an outdoor games club for working girls or help one already started, for many of the clubs would be very glad of the assistance of an experienced player.¹⁹⁰

To help facilitate such good works, the magazine carried appeals for help and equipment from, among others, England international and honorary secretary of the Northern LHA Florence Mack. She was 'coaching a factory girls' club in Liverpool', while Marian Montagu – the St Quinton's club captain who had once asked the AEWH to form an elite league – had set up 'a Sunday afternoon

¹⁹⁰ Editorial, *The Hockey Field*, 15 October 1908, 3-4

club in connection with the Jewish Working Girls' Club in Dean Street, Soho'.¹⁹¹ Montagu had instigated the club in 1893, with her younger sister Lily, founder and driving force behind the Liberal Jewish movement in England.¹⁹² *The Hockey Field* also carried appeals for help from a Miss Healey, who was organising a working girls' club in Rochdale, and Alice Franklin, who had started a village girls' club in Chesham'. Franklin was a feminist who helped found the Townswomen's Guild and who, after World War One, was secretary of the Overseas Settlement of British Women.¹⁹³ Over several seasons, it was also reported that Miss Nathan had set up 'a Sunday afternoon club for Jewish girls' in Stamford Hill, and Isabel Stead had 'formed a club for working girls in... Walworth', most of whom were employed in warehouses and factories.¹⁹⁴ An indication of the popularity of such organisations was given by M Heaton-Smith, who planned to start a club 'in a very poor part of Manchester, in connection with the Girls' Institute, Ancoats'. The girls, she wrote, could not afford to pay more than eight pence subscription, 'and as I hope to have a membership of about forty, we could not provide anything like a sufficient number of sticks'.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ *ibid*, 4; *The Hockey Field*, 3 November 1910, 36

¹⁹² Ellen M Umansky, Lily Montagu 1873-1963, Jewish Women's Archive – www.jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/montagu-lily: accessed 11 December 2018

¹⁹³ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 14 January 1909, 244; Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 15 October 1908. Franklin's brother Hugh was a leading supporter of the WSPU and was repeatedly imprisoned and force fed. Her niece Rosalind contributed to the discovery of the double helix structure of DNA. (Rosalind Franklin, Trustee Franklin on the legacy of Rosalind Franklin PhD, 23 September 2016 – www.rosalindfranklin.edu/news/trustee-franklin-on-the-legacy-of-rosalind-franklin-phd: accessed 21 January 2019; Alison Bailey, Formidable women of Chesham Bois – amershammuseum.org/history/people/20th-century/formidable-women: accessed 21 January 2019)

¹⁹⁴ *The Hockey Field*, 27 October 1910, 20; and *The Hockey Field*, 30 October 1913, 2. This was Robert Browning Hall, established by Isabel's father Francis Stead, a Congregationalist minister who played a major role in the campaign for old age pensions (see Mark K Smith, Francis Herbert Stead, Browning Hall and the fight for old age pensions, *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education* – www.infed.org/thinkers/herbert_stead_browning_hall_pensions.htm: accessed 9 May 2014

¹⁹⁵ *The Hockey Field*, 24 November 1910, 83

Some readers, however, questioned the wisdom of encouraging lower-class girls to take up the game. In an article titled 'A few thoughts on working girls' and other hockey clubs', 'EJ' said she had 'nothing but admiration... for those who try to brighten toil-worn lives', but wondered whether 'hockey is the best means to this end for girls of the working class'. Her concern, she said, was not that such girls would get ideas above their station by playing a game that their social superiors happen to play, 'for no mere game, played once or twice a week, will suffice to take any girl out of the position for which she is designed... so those who desire that no one shall budge from what is deemed to be their position may take comfort'.¹⁹⁶ No, EJ's concern was that hockey was too strenuous an activity for women 'who often spend much of their time in heavy manual work' – not only by dint of their occupation, but also because they carried out the majority of household chores. To banish any notion among *The Hockey Field* readership that housework was not so tough, EJ recounted a tale from her 'rash youth', when 'I begged, almost with tears, to be allowed, as a delightful game, to scrub the nice red bricks on the kitchen floor'. With barely two square yards completed, she had had to give up, much 'to the disgust of the maid, who had hoped to benefit by my incomprehensible desire':

I still remember the excruciating stiffness the next day; the first game of the season at hockey is as nothing compared with it. For girls who do this kind of thing daily, to its bitter end, as a matter of course, are

¹⁹⁶ EJ, 'A few thoughts on working girls' and other hockey clubs, *The Hockey Field*, 22 December 1910, 149

not violent games unnecessary, and likely to take them "beyond the health limit of fatigue"...?¹⁹⁷

There was more of a case for 'town girls' playing hockey, EJ believed, because 'the daughters of the smaller tradesmen, clerks, and others, are often the very ones whose tendency is to take no exercise all, even household work being not infrequently considered degrading'. In addition to healthy activity in the open air, she wrote, hockey would provide such girls with 'a little intercourse with some broadminded public schoolgirls who will, half-consciously perhaps, show them that these are not the "things that matter", and before the season is over will have them asking to be allowed to roll the hockey ground, and learning incidentally many other things of value'.¹⁹⁸

Such social intercourse was not considered desirable by all members of the AEWhA, however. In 1907, a letter to *The Hockey Field* recounted how several members of a 'ladies' club' had refused to allow a skilled player to join their ranks because her father was in trade, and they thought themselves above playing with a tradesman's daughter.¹⁹⁹ EJ, however, suggested allowing such women to play with their social 'superiors' could be considered as 'good works' – nobler even, perhaps, than caring for the poor:

for it would involve self-sacrifice, as those who are generous to girls a little beneath them in the social scale have always to risk being thought "queer" by their own class, many of whom find it much more difficult to

¹⁹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹⁹ McCrone, *Playing the game*, 134

be generous to partly educated girls, a little below them socially, than to the very poor.²⁰⁰

This difficulty stemmed from a fear that 'town girls' would presume upon the relationship and become a nuisance – a fear that EJ thought groundless because 'very few people enjoy being where they are not wanted, and also it is always... in the power of the social superior to say "thus far and no farther"'. She added:

Leaving out all question as to who ought and who ought not to be admitted to the circle of the cultivated, apart from hockey, it is as easy and most generous to say "thus far" after a game of hockey than before it, for who would keep such a fine game from any who would play it?²⁰¹

Certainly not England's schools and employers, many of whom started to introduce the sport to a slightly broader range of girls and women in the years running up to World War One. The expansion of secondary education in England – stimulated by the 1902 Education Act – increased sporting opportunities for girls 'of sufficient ability but insufficient means'.²⁰² As a result, the number of 'Old Girls' hockey clubs and teams connected to training colleges increased. Roger Munting and Steve Crewe have also highlighted that work-based sports clubs were on the rise at this time, with many companies – including Cadbury (Bournville), Colman's (Norwich), Rowntree's

²⁰⁰ EJ, A few thoughts on working girls' and other hockey clubs, *The Hockey Field*, 22 December 1910, 149

²⁰¹ *ibid*

²⁰² Nonita Glenday and Mary Price, *Reluctant revolutionaries: a century of head mistresses 1874-1974* (Pitman Publishing, London 1974), 50

(York), Boots (Nottinghamshire) and Tootal Broadhurst (Bolton) – providing facilities for their employees, prompted by concern over the nation's health after the disastrous Boer War campaigns.²⁰³ Some of these works teams even competed in leagues; in Northampton in 1909, it was reported that 'every shoe factory had its young women's hockey team and that a league had been formed to encourage the playing of the game'.²⁰⁴ Aside from Bournville Girls' Athletic Club (BGAC, affiliated 1908) and Boots Athletic Club (1913), however, there is no evidence that any of these organisations were members of the AEWHHA before 1914.

Three hockey teams were formed at Cadbury's Bournville site in 1905 and this had expanded to five by 1911. Boots' hockey club came into existence in 1908, after the company's *Athletic Club Journal* carried an article bemoaning the lack of sports provision for women. It was reported that 'in one department of the works alone there were "fifteen young ladies all ready and anxious to try their luck at hockey".' The club attracted 200 members and began playing interdepartmental matches, as well as arranging to play external clubs the following season.²⁰⁵

Rowntree's first hockey team was formed in 1911, and by its second season the club had 30 members. Practices and matches were held on Saturday afternoons, and home and away fixtures against 10 other clubs in the York area were scheduled for the 1912-13 season. However, membership of the club 'appears to have been limited to office staff and members of the

²⁰³ Roger Munting, The games ethic and industrial capitalism before 1914: the provision of company sports, *Sport in History* 23:1, Summer 2003, 45-63; Steven Crewe, What about the workers? Works-based sport and recreation in England c.1918-c.1970', *Sport in History* 34:4, December 2014, 544-568

²⁰⁴ Anon, Presentation of cricket medals, *Express and Advertiser*, 27 October 1909, 5

²⁰⁵ Parratt, *'More than mere amusement'*, 218

Social Department'; production-line workers, claims Catriona Parratt, 'lacked the cultural, material and physical resources for sport', and 'were vastly under-represented in the Rowntree's tennis, cricket and hockey teams'.²⁰⁶ Whether this was the situation at AEWHHA affiliates Boots and the BGAC needs further research. It is likely to have been the case, however, if members of the association were questioning the value of hockey to working-class women and others were shunning the daughters of small tradesmen.

Regions and rules

Despite the many distractions of a country in flux, the AEWHHA continued to expand and innovate during the first decade of the new century. County and territorial associations were established from 1896, after the governing body initially granted permission for Helen Chamberlain and Christabel Lawrence to organise county teams in the Midlands and Sussex respectively.²⁰⁷ Again, however, this organisational development was contested among the AEWHHA membership.

While Lawrence and Emily Johnson proposed that counties be allowed to make their own arrangements for forming county teams, Alice Lyster – now headmistress at Bedford Park School, Chiswick, and playing for the local hockey team – feared this would put the AEWHHA 'in danger of losing control of local clubs'.²⁰⁸ Instead, she and Susan Smee suggested the governing body

²⁰⁶ *ibid*, 209-11

²⁰⁷ Minutes of the AEWHHA special general meeting, 17 November 1896, UoB Archive A/1/1, 21-22

²⁰⁸ Minutes of the AEWHHA special general meeting, 2 April 1897, UoB Archive A/1/1, 34-35; The weeks Irish news: Dublin and the suburbs, *Weekly Irish Times*, 31 March 1900, 15. In 1900, Bedford Park School was looking for bigger premises and took a short lease on Twickenham Park Mansion, from which Alice Lyster and her sister Elizabeth ran Ravensbourne boarding school for girls. They relocated to larger premises at Crofton Grange, Orpington, in 1903. (J W Harris, Twickenham Park

be given the power to elect county teams and arrange matches. Columbines, meanwhile, put forward an alternative to county sides; it proposed that affiliated clubs be classified and play against each other 'in the manner followed in an American tournament'. Its concern was that 'the existence of county teams was apt to withdraw members from local club games'. This was countered by Lilian Clapham, however, who said 'if clubs had members good enough to play in county or international matches, they should be glad to let them go'.²⁰⁹

Despite their differences in approach, AEWHHA members were unanimous that 'within certain limitations, the time [had] now come for the formation of county teams'. So they agreed that a county must have three or more AEWHHA-affiliated clubs to form a team, and a committee was appointed to decide how matches should be regulated.²¹⁰ Territories followed: North, South, Midlands and West at first; then – in 1906 – East Anglia, but only after a prolonged and feisty exchange of views that resulted in the AEWHHA officers tendering their resignations en bloc.²¹¹ The main bone of contention was the redistribution of counties to the new region, the South losing three and the Midlands five.²¹² Chief among the aggrieved parties was Midlands Association president Annie Bouchier, who complained of the 'very arbitrary decision of the AE Council in allotting so many of our counties to the new Eastern Association'. She believed such a 'grave injustice' should be aired more widely, so wrote to *The Hockey Field*:

Mansion 1891-1929, Twickenham Park Residents Association – twickenhampark.co.uk: accessed 19 January 2019)

²⁰⁹ Minutes of the AEWHHA special general meeting, 2 April 1897, UoB Archive A/1/1, 33-35

²¹⁰ *ibid*, 36-37

²¹¹ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 15 & 2

²¹² S M Smees, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 22 February 1906, 273

I was surprised, and shall always regret, that those who have the honour to represent their association on the AE Council could with so easy a conscience put aside the object for which they are called together – namely, the protection and interests of all counties and clubs affiliated to the AEWHA. We have in every possible way placed before them, the great harm and absolute ruin they would bring, not only on us, the oldest of the present associations, but on two or three of our counties.²¹³

AEWHA vice-president Geraldine Somerville took issue with Bouchier calling the association 'arbitrary' and 'unjust'. 'Both accusations, to a public body, are most serious... and absolutely untrue. The very fact of Miss Faithfull's presence at the meetings will be enough to disprove both accusations in the mind of any unbiased person.'²¹⁴ It is unclear why Somerville elevated the private members' association to a public body, but order was later restored and a collapse of the Council averted. This incident, however, is remembered by Lilian Faithful as one of only two grave problems that arose during her 12-year presidency.²¹⁵

That territorial identity should push the AEWHA to the brink of an administrative crisis illustrates the importance of hockey in its members' lives and the passion with which they were prepared to advocate for it. That, collectively, they brought the association back from the brink indicates a

²¹³ A Bouchier, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 15 February 1906, 257

²¹⁴ Geraldine Somerville, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 22 February 1906, 273

²¹⁵ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 15 & 2

governing body that had started to mature into a solid organisation, with definite structures and a committed constituency of supporters.

Another indication of the women's growing confidence came in 1907, when they began modifying the rules of the game without reference to the HA. Their first amendment was to ban the hooking of sticks, a move that the AEWHHA had considered in 1900 but rejected on the basis of honouring the wishes of the 1895 cohort to follow the rules of the HA.²¹⁶ Under these, an opponent's stick could be 'hooked' if it was within striking distance of the ball – but, complained international player Eric Green, 'ninety per cent of the so-called hooking... is deliberate striking at or knocking up the stick', which was rarely penalised by umpires.²¹⁷ Despite such widespread abuse of the rule, the 'startling' consequences of the AEWHHA's ban on interfering with an opponent's stick could not be comprehended by *The Bystander*:

What is a half-back to do if a forward gets past her? I take it that she must run after that forward, overtake, and even outrun her before she can legitimately attack her again, which thing, if the forward is at all speedy, takes some doing.²¹⁸

The correspondent was also concerned for the feminist implications of such a divergence from the men's rules:

²¹⁶ Minutes of the AEWHHA special general meeting, 23 May 1900, UoB Archive A/1/1, 122-123

²¹⁷ Eric Green, Hockey: bring the rules of the game up to date, *The Sporting Times*, 3 November 1928, 10

²¹⁸ Games and pastimes: lady lawgivers, *The Bystander*, 6 November 1907, 290

There are only a very few outdoor games or sports in which women can compete with men on terms of actual equality; but there are more than a few in which women can, at any rate, emulate men, proceeding exactly upon men's lines. Any growing dissimilarity between the rules of hockey and the rules of hockey as played by women must necessarily mean that hockey, per se, is not a suitable game for women – a proposition with which, I am sure, a great many women hockey players would not agree.²¹⁹

Indeed, they would not; having 'refused to curtail women's behaviour' by adopting the men's rules in 1895 – when there was more debate about whether hockey was a suitable game for females – the AEWHHA was now sufficiently secure about women's position within the sport to start taking the lead in changing it.²²⁰ It went on to amend the regulations on tackling from the left-hand side and penalty corners, obliging the attacking team to stop the ball before a strike on goal, rather than taking a 'flying hit' at it. The HA soon followed suit on these changes, but would take 31 years to ban the hooking of sticks from its game.²²¹ In the intervening period, a consensus emerged that hockey as played by women was superior to the version stubbornly adhered to by the men.

Eric Green described the AEWHHA rule changes as 'a very distinct improvement in several respects'. 'I have watched many ladies' matches,' he wrote, 'and can, without the slightest prejudice, say that their abolition of the

²¹⁹ *ibid*, 292

²²⁰ Constanzo, 'One can't shake off the women', 37

²²¹ The Scribe, Hockey formation, *London Daily News*, 28 September 1910, 8; Changes in hockey laws, *Western Gazette*, 22 July 1938, 16

hooking of sticks and the disregarding of tackling on the left, unless it be definite obstruction, makes the game far cleaner and more interesting to watch.'²²² Meanwhile, the *Liverpool Echo*'s hockey correspondent, G N Osborne, could only stroke his chin 'gravely' and ponder 'a solid truth' when asked by a male umpire to explain 'why women's hockey is so much a truer exhibition of a stick game, cleaner in its execution, and with fifty per cent less whistle than in a man's game?'.²²³

The answer may have lain with the HA itself. As early as 1899 there had been 'a deal of talk... about the alleged inadequacies of the rules of hockey', prompting honorary secretary Stanley Christopherson to remind members that 'such rules were modelled for a game to be played by gentlemen, as gentlemen'. He was supported in his reluctance towards reform by England international Sidney Kitcat, who asserted that: 'There was no grumbling about the decisions of umpires in the earlier days of hockey; and if the present generation would only play the game according to the spirit, rather than the words of the rules, there would be no grumbling today.'²²⁴ The HA was still clinging to these views 10 years later, much to the consternation of London *Daily News* correspondent 'The Scribe':

It was all very well to talk of the spirit of [the rules] 20 years ago, when the game was confined to a very few clubs, and all who played knew each other... but times have changed, and the hockey world has become very large... Already the All England Women's HA has fallen

²²² Eric Green, Hockey: bring the rules of the game up to date, *The Sporting Times*, 3 November 1928, 10

²²³ G N Osborne, Hockey mentors and their value, *Liverpool Echo*, 20 October 1934, 3

²²⁴ *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 14 January 1899, 742

out with the Hockey Association over the rules and... my contention that the rules... should be rewritten from beginning to end, and made perfectly clear to the understanding of the most humble in the game, appears to be sound.²²⁵

In their defence, the Home Nations' men's hockey associations had recognised the need to collaborate on the rules as hockey gained in popularity, and they formed the International Hockey Board in 1900.²²⁶ The organisation – led by England – was, however, 'severely criticised for its lack of lucidity', and The Scribe declared that 'conservatism in official quarters has been carried to such excess as to be almost pathetic'. He urged that, when the rules were rewritten, the HA and the International Board 'invite the cooperation of all interested in the game... lest a pig-headed policy should necessitate the task having to be done all over again'.²²⁷

The call was still being made in 1928, when Eric Green – having praised the clarity of the AEWHAs rule-making – insisted that 'it would be for the good of the game... to reconstitute the International Hockey Board and, in doing so, confer with the All England Women's Hockey Association, so that both associations play under the same code'.²²⁸

Having 'set the precedent of taking the rules into [its] own hands' in 1907 – rather than relying implicitly on the rulings of the HA – the AEWHAs

²²⁵ The Scribe, Hockey gossip: a word in season to stubborn officials, *Daily News*, 13 October 1909, 8. The phrase 'fallen out' in this instance appears to have been used to indicate the AEWHAs was no longer in step with the HA, rather than that the two organisations were on bad terms

²²⁶ Mirov, *The history of hockey*, 143

²²⁷ The Scribe, Hockey gossip: a word in season to stubborn officials, *Daily News*, 13 October 1909, 8

²²⁸ Eric Green, Hockey: bring the rules of the game up to date, *The Sporting Times*, 3 November 1928, 10

quickly came to be viewed as the more progressive, forward-thinking and innovative governing body.²²⁹ Within 12 years of being set up, it also had in place an organisational structure that was capable of withstanding the threat of schism and that offered players a progressive representative route from club to country. International matches with Ireland were an established part of the sporting calendar, and challenges from the Scottish and Welsh hockey associations were being taken up. As the first decade of the 20th century drew to a close, however, the AEWHHA – much like the rest of Britain – was being buffeted by the winds of change.

Changing times

It is impossible to verify the number of clubs in England that were not affiliated to the AEWHHA, but – by 1908 – enough were playing their hockey outside of its purview to warrant a recruitment campaign. The governing body's balance sheet for the 1907/08 season 'showed an *excess of £14-6-0 of expenditure over income*'²³⁰, so the AEWHHA 'decided that it was advisable for steps to be taken in order to induce more clubs to affiliate'. A notice was printed and sent to the secretaries of all known unaffiliated clubs, outlining the purpose of the AEWHHA and encouraging them to join.²³¹ The association, it read, was founded:

to control and organise the game of hockey for women... It is therefore a matter of regret... that there still remain a large number of unaffiliated

²²⁹ The Scribe, Hockey formation: the revised rules, *Daily News*, 28 September 1910, 8

²³⁰ AEWHHA Council minutes, 25 September 1908, UoB Archives A/1/4, 152. Emphasis added

²³¹ AEWHHA Council minutes, 7 February 1908, UoB Archives A/1/4, 140

clubs outside the Association which, whilst indirectly deriving considerable benefit from the existence of such an Association, decline to number themselves in its ranks. By withholding their support they are possibly doing an injustice to the individual members of their team in depriving them of all chance of representing their county, territory or country, and they are *nullifying the power of the Association* to make the English team entirely representative of the best women's hockey in England.²³²

The general tone of this notice, and the language used, suggest the AEWH was concerned not only with its deteriorating financial situation, but also with losing its grip on the sport and becoming an irrelevance. Even some of its keenest supporters described the association as 'a purely academic body, whose decisions and rules are not adhered to even by affiliated clubs'.²³³ Which rules and decisions were being ignored by members was not specified, but it suggests that the AEWH – an amateur organisation, reliant on volunteer administrators and based largely in one region (the South East) – was struggling to impose its authority as a national governing body.

It had also yet to work out how to cater for the expanding group of middle-class players who chose to work, and who could not spare the time for county trials or matches during the week. Clubs with such members could not 'as a rule... hope to become as proficient as clubs which have the leisure for practising and playing during the week', so it was pointless to ask for fixtures 'as the disparity would probably be too great'.²³⁴ As a result, many clubs were

²³² *ibid*, 136. Emphasis added

²³³ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 22 December 1910, 147

²³⁴ The Ladies Hockey League, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 388

starting to question what benefits they derived from the AEWHHA for the 15s annual subscription.²³⁵

The recruitment drive therefore had to convince clubs that the governing body could add value to their hockey-playing experience – and as affiliations hit a new high of 291 for the start of the 1908/09 season, it can perhaps be deduced that it enjoyed some initial success.²³⁶ Among the clubs that joined in 1908 was Bournville GAC, which suggests the governing body was also prepared to cast its net slightly wider than the traditional 'ladies clubs' – although, as mentioned, the socio-economic make-up of such works teams needs further research. The boost to membership figures was short-lived, however, and a decline began to reveal itself in subsequent years; the number of affiliated clubs at the start of the 1910/11 season was 245, down from 272 the previous year.²³⁷ Honorary secretary Muriel Julius – in her report to the AGM – admitted the figures made for worrying reading, but she did not think the AEWHHA had to 'feel unduly depressed by it'. Hockey had enjoyed a time when it was '*the fashionable pursuit*', she said, and it was only to be expected that clubs would fall away.²³⁸ Indeed, a proportion of clubs had always come and gone – and, more than a decade after the governing body had been set up, some teams may have fallen by the wayside as ageing, original members retired from playing. Julius, however, proffered another reason why the AEWHHA was struggling to maintain affiliation numbers:

²³⁵ AEWHHA recruitment flyer, included in the AEWHHA Council minutes, 7 February 1908, UoB Archive A/1/4, 139

²³⁶ AEWHHA Affiliated Clubs List 1908/09, National Hockey Museum Archive

²³⁷ AEWHHA Affiliated Clubs List 1910/11 & 1909/10, National Hockey Museum Archive

²³⁸ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 18. Author's emphasis

Many of the present-day players belong to the working portion of the community, and join clubs which only play one day a week – on Saturdays – and to whom the apparent advantages of joining the Association are nil; they therefore join leagues and such-like organisations that lay themselves out specially to cater for them.²³⁹

This then was the challenge facing the AEWHHA as a new decade dawned – a broadening demographic of players who wanted to play the game in a different way. More than 10 years after it had resolved its internal differences on trophies, competitions and a person's amateur status – often unsatisfactorily and rarely unanimously – the AEWHHA was being forced to revisit these arguments with players who chose not to align themselves with the governing body. Women's changing status in society had moved hockey beyond the exclusive realm of leisured ladies with limitless time and money. Now, highly educated women who opted to enter the workforce or serve on the numerous public bodies that wanted their talents, had to fit their hockey-playing into increasingly busy schedules. As a result, traditional friendly fixtures – often played in midweek and prone to last-minute cancellations – were becoming less attractive or convenient. The AEWHHA, in many ways, was the epitome of this increasingly liberated English womanhood – and many of its members were actively campaigning for such emancipation to be extended to parliament – but it was slow to appreciate the consequences of such change for its own governance. Having steered hockey away from its cloistered, university origins and towards being *the* winter team sport for women and girls in England, it had

²³⁹ *ibid*

to work out how best to lead an organisation that was no longer simply a society of friends.

County and territorial associations had helped stimulate wider interest in the game around the country, but would need careful management if the governing body's authority was not to be diluted by regional committees with potentially conflicting agendas. In addition, large employers, secondary schools and charitable AEWHA members were introducing hockey to a broader cross-section of English society, for whom the concept of play for play's sake held less cultural capital or resonance. Clubs connected with works and welfare associations would not emerge in any great number until after World War One, but – as subsequent chapters of this thesis will show – the idea of them alone would challenge the AEWHA's willingness and ability to be an association for *all* women's hockey in England.

The new decade also brought a change of personnel at the head of the AEWHA, with Lilian Faithfull stepping down as president, to be replaced by Geraldine Somerville. She took over just as news of the formation of the Lancashire and Cheshire Ladies Hockey League reached the AEWHA Council – and, as Chapter Two will show, the existence, membership and governance of this parochial competition would test the new administration, as the dormant debate about playing for points and prizes was reignited.

Chapter 2: The formation of the Lancashire and Cheshire Ladies Hockey League

'Will you walk into our parlour?' say the Leagues to the 'A'.*

'Twill be so very good for you, we've lots of subs to pay.

We'll give you charming prizes – chaste urns of shining gold,

And we will ask you nothing but to be by us controlled?'

'No thank you, oh, by no means,' the smiling 'A' replies.

'To accept your invitation we think would be unwise.

We'd rather keep our freedom, our pleasant games to play.

For golden cups 'tis possible [sic] too big a price to pay.'¹

*AEWHA

On 6 May 1910, a brief but precise statement appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, which read: the 'Northern Ladies Hockey Association and the Lancashire & Cheshire Ladies Hockey Association state that the Ladies Hockey League, which has been started among Lancashire and Cheshire clubs, is not connected with them'.² A ball had yet to be hit in the LHL when these AEWHA-affiliated associations distanced themselves from the competition, which was scheduled to start in the 1910/11 season. Their pronouncement was one of many indications, highlighted in this thesis, that the league was expected to appeal to the same demographic as the AEWHA – otherwise, why remind members so publicly of the governing body's

¹ Anon, Will you walk into my parlour?, *The Hockey Field*, 9 February 1911, 260

² Ladies Hockey: Northern Counties Association and the new league, *Manchester Guardian*, 6 May 1910, 11

disapproval of competitions? After all, no such notice had emanated from the Midlands association when a league 'in connection with the Leather Trades Athletic Association' was established in Northamptonshire in 1908.³

The AEWH Council's attention had been brought to the formation of the LHL in June 1910, during a Tuesday night meeting at Caxton Hall, Westminster. Lilian Faithfull – who stepped down as president that evening, after 16 seasons in office – led a discussion on the desirability of prize competitions and challenge cups in hockey, after which the Council decided to consult the General Meeting.⁴ The consensus must have been to wait and see if the league actually got off the ground in October, because the issue was raised again four months later, when a letter from Lancashire and North captain Florence Mack alerted the Council to the reality of the LHL.⁵ Set up by businessman Fred A. Brown, the competition comprised two divisions, each containing 10 teams drawn from within a 10-mile radius of Manchester city centre. The extremities of the catchment area were the towns of Leigh (in the west), Bolton (north-west), Saddleworth (north-east and, actually, in Yorkshire), Altrincham (south-west) and Davenport (south).

The league was already three weeks into its schedule when the AEWH Council agreed that a special council meeting should be held to consider the implications of the LHL's existence – both for itself and for hockey in general.⁶ As the competition entered its eighth round, the AEWH Council decided that 'the best interests of the game were furthered by keeping it free from any

³ Northampton news, *Northampton Mercury*, 18 December 1908, 9

⁴ AEWH Council minutes, 7 June 1910, UoB Archive A/1/4, 188

⁵ AEWH Council minutes, 28 October 1910, UoB Archive A/1/4, 190

⁶ Leigh Ladies Hockey Club: Fixtures 1910/11, *Leigh Chronicle*, 15 July 1910, 7. Leigh began their league programme against Saddleworth on 8 October. The AEWH Council's decision to hold a special council meeting was taken on 28 October

system of prize competitions or awards'.⁷ It is unclear what this tardy declaration was expected to achieve, beyond clarifying the AEWHAs policy on leagues and cups. The LHL continued to operate and, by doing so, showed itself to be unconcerned about – or unaware of – the pontifications of a south-centric organisation based many miles away. For despite its nominal pretensions of being an All England authority, the AEWHAs heartlands were London, the Home Counties and East Anglia: only 51 of the 245 clubs affiliated for the 1910/11 season were based in the north.⁸ In addition, the AEWHAs, as the governing body of an amateur sport, relied on a network of volunteer administrators, which made for erratic oversight and enforcement of its rules. As a result, the Council's restatement of its position on leagues and cups may have had less and less impact with every mile travelled north from London – especially as the wider AEWHAs membership was not asked to debate the issue, 'which would have been done if the Council had been undecided in the matter'.⁹

For many paid-up members, therefore, the main source of information on the LHL and the AEWHAs reaction to it was *The Hockey Field*, which was independent of the governing body, but – by and large – a cheerleader for it. A measure of their symbiotic relationship can be gauged from the fact that the magazine's founder and editor, Edith Thompson, chaired the Council meeting at which the decision to maintain the ban on competitive hockey was taken. In her next editorial, and with no declaration of interest, Thompson said she felt sure 'the great majority of our readers will agree in thinking that the AEWHAs

⁷ AEWHAs Council minutes, 15 December 1910, UoB Archive A/1/4, 196

⁸ AEWHAs Official Clubs List 1910/11, UoB archive A/5/10

⁹ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 22 December 1910, 147

have acted wisely'. She did concede, however, that there are 'those who think differently and who... seem to consider that the AEWHHA is not strong enough to stand alone to fight the growing desire for prize matches'.¹⁰ Such top-down pronouncements and underhand editorialising could make the decision-makers and influencers at the top of the AEWHHA seem self-serving and out of touch with the playing experience of some sections of its own membership, nevermind those who played hockey outside of its remit. As a result, the growing desire for prize matches was as likely to be coming from within the governing body as without – and some concerned affiliates began urging the organisation to evolve. One critic of its policy position believed support for competitions and trophies was strong enough among women players to have a major adverse effect on affiliation figures – something s/he thought a weak AEWHHA could ill afford. In a letter to *The Hockey Field*, the Leeds-based correspondent – referred to only by the initials 'E.W.S.' – wrote:

I am afraid that in the near future the association will find itself seriously hampered if it maintains its present attitude. Leagues have come to stay. Then it is far better to recognise and control them *than to allow the membership of the AEWHHA to gradually dwindle away*. One cannot stop a popular movement, but one may control and guide it; and if taken in hand at once, the large accession of membership and subscriptions will give the AEWHHA *the controlling power which at present they [sic] lack*.¹¹

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ E W S, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 5 January 1911, 190. Emphasis added

E.W.S.'s comments are yet more evidence that the LHL was appealing to the same constituency as the AEWhA. It is unclear whether s/he thinks its declining numbers would result from clubs actively resigning their affiliation to pursue league competition, or simply not renewing or taking up membership – but there is no doubt s/he believes the AEWhA and LHL were fishing in the same pond. The governing body admitted as much towards the end of 1910, when it reported that the Northern Ladies Hockey Association had found it necessary 'to ask several clubs to resign, as they had joined a league... which competes for a shield, and by Rule XIII this is illegal'.¹² Among the outlaws were Cheshire side Altrincham St Margaret's and Lancashire club Levenshulme. Both appear on the AEWhA clubs list for the 1909/10 season, but not on the one for 1910/11 – when they lined up, instead, for the inaugural LHL season.¹³

In another admission that it was at risk of losing members to the LHL, the AEWhA ventured that no 'clubs of any standing will be content to remain outside of the Association for long. This, of course, means they are debarred from all county, territorial, and international honours, and will probably find it difficult to get fixtures with affiliated clubs'.¹⁴ Despite this assumption and the evidence of its own records, however, the governing body still insisted that the Manchester-centric league was chiefly concerned with 'early closing' or 'working girls' clubs, which 'never have been within the jurisdiction of the AEWhA, and it does not seem likely that they ever will be'.¹⁵ This perception

¹² Northern LHA, *The Hockey Field*, 20 October 1910, 9

¹³ AEWhA, Official Clubs Lists 1909/10 and 1910/11, UoB Archive A/5/9

¹⁴ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 22 December 1910, 147

¹⁵ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

of leagues as being for lower-class shop assistants and factory workers is strong among the current secondary literature on women's hockey. This chapter will challenge the truth of this characterisation, however, by analysing some of the teams and players that took part in the pre-1914 LHL. It will also examine reasons for the competition's emergence, chart its growth during the four years up to World War One, and look at the reaction the LHL provoked within English hockey – in particular, the AEWHAs attitude towards such competitions during these early years. Would the governing body be strong enough to stand alone against the desire for points and prizes, or would E.W.S.'s comments prove the more prescient?

The launch of the LHL and reaction to it

The AEWHA's regional bias does appear to have been a factor in the founding of the LHL, which, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, was set up as a 'way of dissenting from the [non-competitive] policy of the All England Women's Hockey Association, which is governed practically from the south of England'.¹⁶ Its aim was to cater for teams throughout Lancashire and Cheshire, but – as already mentioned – the inaugural sides were mostly drawn from a small area around Manchester. In its first season, Division One consisted of: Altrincham St Margaret's; Ashton; Clarendon; Clifton; Leigh; Levenshulme; Oldham; Saddleworth; Urmston Ladies; and Withington. Division Two was made up of the 'A' teams of Ashton, Clifton, Leigh, Levenshulme, Oldham and Withington, plus sides from Coldhurst, Dukinfield, Gorton and Holyrood.

¹⁶ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 3 April 1911, 3

While two of the 14 clubs involved – Altrincham St Margaret's and Levenshulme – had left the AEWHHA to join the LHL, there is no record of the other 12 ever having been members of the governing body. Although impossible to verify, this ratio of six unaffiliated clubs to one – if typical of even some areas of England – would suggest a sizeable community of women playing their hockey outside of the AEWHHA. Either such players were unaware of the governing body's existence, or they saw little benefit in subscribing to it. The AEWHHA, after all, believed the 'excitement of playing for club, county and territory' was all the reward players should require, and the pattern of its season had developed to support such progression.¹⁷ Club games began in October, with selection for county and territorial sides taking place either side of Christmas, before an international fixture in March brought the curtain down on play before summer. By definition, however, representative honours were limited to a select few and those who lacked the talent, inclination or – as was often the criticism – the connections to work their way up the hockey hierarchy may have felt more at home playing outside of the AEWHHA. It was a reality that even the governing body recognised during the heated debate that played out in *The Hockey Field* after news of the LHL emerged. Perhaps in an effort to rationalise its own lack of appeal, however, the AEWHHA chose to characterise league sides as 'working women's clubs', who had little to gain from affiliating to the governing body, 'beyond, of course, a certain increase of prestige and an extended fixture list'. Nearly all the players, it added:

¹⁷ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 8 December 1910, 115

are working girls, only able to play hockey on Saturday afternoons, and therefore precluded from all thoughts of county or territorial play, and practically from all hope of ever being first-class players. Their ambition being thus checked, it is perhaps almost natural that they should welcome some additional excitement [playing in leagues and for cups] to add zest to their weekly games.¹⁸

The aforementioned 'secretary of a northern club', who believed the AEWHHA was a purely academic body, added to the conjecture about how competition had managed to rear its head in women's hockey. She claimed: 'In the north, it is the custom as soon as a game becomes popular to form a league – a Boys' Brigade Cricket League, an Elementary Schools Football league, and so on ad infinitum'.¹⁹ Why s/he chose to illustrate the point by citing junior-level, lower-class organisations is unclear, unless to imply a diminished level of maturity – as well as social standing – among women who preferred not to play hockey purely for its own sake. The secretary's words would certainly have added weight to the impression of LHL players promoted by the AEWHHA, which blamed 'the tendency of the day to demand prizes upon all occasions' on:

the fact that hockey and other kindred games have been recently taken up by a different class of people; that to those brought up in [sic] the playing fields of Eton, Rugby, Roedean and Cheltenham the game itself is sufficient, but... the players who clamour for rewards apart from

¹⁸ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

¹⁹ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 22 December 1910, 147

the actual victory are those who are new to games, whose parents have never played games, and who have no tradition of good sportsmanship to uphold.²⁰

The veracity of this characterisation will be examined later in this chapter, but professional hockey and cricket coach Lewis Roalfe had his own theory about why the LHL had emerged. He informed readers of *The Hockey Field* that 'the very latest development in ladies' hockey' was 'only following on [from] what has already taken place in men's hockey in some northern and midland districts, and, to my mind, was bound to come sooner or later'.²¹ Canterbury-born Roalfe had been a professional at Dover Cricket Club in 1892 and 'held some good engagements in Kent as a professional cricketer'.²² In more recent years, however, he had applied his skills to training women and claimed to have obtained 'splendid results in ladies' hockey and cricket clubs' – although he is not specific about which ones.²³ Roalfe also contributed articles to *The Hockey Field* and his comments on the formation of the LHL were part of a longer treatise on 'Leagues, Sham Amateurism and Professionalism'. In this, he argued that the governing bodies' fear that professionalism would inevitably follow in the wake of leagues was misplaced – not only because 'in ladies hockey it might be slow in coming', but also because:

²⁰ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 8 December 1910, 115

²¹ Lewis Roalfe, Leagues, sham amateurism and professionalism, *The Hockey Field*, 29 December 1910, 165

²² Dover Cricket Club 1892, *Dover Express*, 9 September 1892, 5; Town, port and garrison, *Dover Express*, 21 August 1903, 5. Roalfe finished the 1892 season with the club's best bowling average, 7.90, and a highest score of 35

²³ Advertisement, Phosferine: the greatest of all tonics, *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 16 September 1902, 2. This advert, bearing Roalfe's endorsement, appeared in numerous regional and local papers throughout England during 1902 and 1903

professionalism is not necessarily an evil. A player who honestly states that he cannot afford to give time and money to attend all matches, and accepts remuneration for his services to a club which wants them and asks for them, is not a delinquent by any means. The evil is in the player who, while retaining his amateur status, yet accepts payment in various ways – more often in the form of greatly excessive expenses.²⁴

Roalfe's comments were like a red rag to a bull to Phillip Collins, secretary of the Hockey Association, who also hailed from Kent and played for his home town, Beckenham, as well as for Folkestone.²⁵ He penned an incredulous response to the article, beginning with a personal attack on its author:

The first question that occurred to my mind was who is Mr Lewis Roalfe that he writes with such apparent authority on this subject? Upon reference to page 173 of the same issue [of *The Hockey Field*] I find the answer: "Mr Lewis Roalfe, professional hockey coach... would like engagements." Further comment is superfluous...

Except it wasn't, and Collins went on to deny that any such league competition in men's hockey 'has been or will be sanctioned' and to demand that Roalfe withdraw his statement unconditionally.²⁶ As Roalfe later pointed out, he had not said such leagues were sanctioned, merely that they existed – and there is evidence from around England that he was correct. At the end of the 1895/96 season, a final table for the Northamptonshire Hockey League was

²⁴ Roalfe, Leagues, sham amateurism and professionalism, *The Hockey Field*, 29 December 1910, 165

²⁵ A loss to hockey, *The Observer*, 8 August 1915, 14

²⁶ Philip Collins, Correspondence: leagues and competitions, *The Hockey Field*, 5 January 1911, 196

published in the local paper, showing Prince's Street atop an eight-strong division, having won 11 and drawn one of their 14 games.²⁷ The *Leamington, Warwick and District Daily Circular* refers to a Midland Counties Hockey League in an 1898 match report of Leamington versus Chester Road Birmingham, which the latter won 4-2²⁸, while clubs in Wiltshire – including Warminster – had plans to launch a competition for the 1904/05 season.²⁹ The Burnley and District Hockey League made an appeal for clubs to join it in 1907³⁰, while a 20-strong mid-season league table was published in both the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Leeds and Yorkshire Mercury* in 1903, showing Roundhay and Ripon battling it out at the top, and Bradford at the bottom.³¹ Intriguingly, two days after this table appeared, the *Yorkshire Evening Post* ran an article discrediting it. The paper's hockey correspondent, 'Bully Off', wrote:

I am thankful to say there is no such league in Yorkshire hockey, and I hope, for the future of the game, there never will be... It has been compiled without the consent of... most of the clubs whose names are given... This so-called League list is most misleading, as very few of the clubs at the top have any right to be considered as good as many near the bottom.³²

Who was compiling this 'so-called League' – and how (perhaps more to the point, why) they were doing it without the cooperation of the clubs involved –

²⁷ Northamptonshire Hockey League, *The Citizen*, 24 March 1896, 5

²⁸ Hockey, *Leamington, Warwick and District Daily Circular*, 11 October 1898, 2

²⁹ Hockey cup presentation, *Wiltshire Times*, 17 October 1903, 5

³⁰ Hockey, *Express and Advertiser*, 7 August 1907, 6

³¹ Hockey, *Leeds and Yorkshire Mercury*, 15 December 1903, 10

³² Bully Off, The week's hockey notes, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 17 December 1903, 3

is not expanded upon. Whether this competition was fact or fiction, however, Roalfe was supported in his assertion that men's leagues operated within England by the founder of the LHL, Fred A Brown. He claimed never to have met the hockey coach, but felt compelled to add to *The Hockey Field's* growing pile of correspondence. After taking the HA secretary to task for not answering the arguments, but simply making 'an attack on the status of Mr Roalfe', the Manchester-based businessman refuted Collins' contention that there were no leagues in men's hockey: 'I have been asked by several clubs in this district (of which I can give names) to form a league', he wrote, 'as they are sick and disgusted with the high-handed way the association at present manages its affairs, and had I the time, [I] would most certainly do so'.³³

As if to illustrate the high-handedness complained of by Brown, Collins demanded that the LHL official supply him with the names of the clubs that were desirous of competitive hockey – something Brown declined 'most emphatically to do'. 'It is evident from Mr Collins' eagerness to obtain these names,' he added, 'that his intention is to deal with them as the AEWhA have dealt with the clubs who have joined this league, a course I could not allow to be taken through any error of mine.' Instead, he said the list of names had been lodged with the sports editor of the *Manchester Evening News*, 'who can, of course, corroborate what I wrote'.³⁴

If there wasn't a men's league in Manchester already, Brown was correct in his assessment of the agitation to create one. By the end of the 1911/12 season, Collins would be forced to muster supporters of the HA to

³³ Fred A Brown, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 19 January 1911, 221

³⁴ Fred A Brown and Philip Collins, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 2 February 1911, 253

defeat just such a proposal by 24 clubs in the area. He wrote to the secretaries of local affiliated sides and urged them to 'make a point of attending the meeting and opposing in every way in your power the formation of the league' – which they duly did, possibly using dubious methods. There were complaints from the advocates of competitive hockey that an amendment opposing a league was only carried (by 24 votes to 12) because several sides had four representatives at the meeting instead of one, and each recorded a vote. Undeterred, a promoter of the meeting insisted that 'without doubt [a men's league] would be formed', but it would consist of clubs not affiliated with the HA, which, he said, had threatened drastic measures against any affiliated club that joined it.³⁵ Soon afterwards, the Manchester District Association (MDA) began arranging regular fixtures and independent umpires for minor clubs in the area, with the aim of generating interest in their games 'by introducing a scheme of playing for points'.³⁶ Intriguingly, the *Pall Mall Gazette* reported that the MDA planned to apply for direct affiliation to the HA, but 'in the event of a refusal, it has been agreed to apply to the Ladies' Hockey League'.³⁷ This suggests that the fledgling LHL was already being considered by some in the north-west of England as a lead authority, if not exactly a governing body. It also indicates a potentially greater level of cooperation and mutuality between men's and women's hockey associations than in the south.

All things considered, Roalfe was justified in coming back at Collins and asking whether he assumes 'the Hockey Association *is* men's hockey?... are

³⁵ Hockey league plans: opposition carry the day, *Sheffield Star Green 'un*, 17 February 1912, 3

³⁶ Side-line, Hockey: news and comments, *The Sportsman*, 22 January 1913, 8

³⁷ An Old Player, Hockey leagues: the northern malcontents, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 5 February 1913, 15. On 10 October 1912, the *Pall Mall Gazette* had reported that the MDA had been sanctioned by the HA and would soon be affiliating to the Northern HA – but this arrangement must have fallen through if, by February 1913, the MDA was considering applying to the LHL

there no clubs outside the men's association? In other words: is the men's Hockey Association so representative that the term "men's hockey" can *only* mean hockey as organised by the Association?'³⁸ While declaring himself an 'enthusiastic supporter' of the HA, Roalfe claimed he 'would not like to state definitely that many more than one-half of the clubs in the country are affiliated to that association'.³⁹

Such questions about reach and relevance had also been asked of the AEWHHA over the years, ever since Christabel Lawrence had first accused the governing body of not doing enough to promote the game and broaden its appeal. Intriguingly, however, the debate on the future direction of the women's game in the 'official organ of the ladies' hockey associations' was largely handed over to male voices. While *The Hockey Field's* proclivity for using only correspondents' initials or pseudonyms sometimes makes it difficult to ascertain their sex, contributions from Roalfe, Collins and Brown dominated the letters pages from December 1910 through to February 1911. There is the communication from E.W.S., who is probably female and a member of the AEWHHA, based on their letter's complimentary close, 'yours obediently'.⁴⁰ The only other readily identifiable correspondence from a woman on the matter deals less with the (un)desirability of league hockey, than with the editor's bare-faced cheek in giving a platform to advocates of it. Miss M. M. Thomson, from Tottenham, wrote:

³⁸ Lewis Roalfe, More on leagues, *The Hockey Field*, 12 January 1911, 197. Original emphasis

³⁹ *ibid*, 198

⁴⁰ E W S, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 5 January 1911, 190

You do not seem to realise, madam, that as editor of the official organ of the AEWHHA, you are responsible to that body for the conduct of your paper, and that in publishing articles directly contrary to the policy of the association, you are surely running a great risk of losing the official support altogether.⁴¹

Having cautiously – but correctly – identified the editor as being ‘a member of the very council whose decision seems to carry so little weight with you’, Thomson concluded: ‘I do not suppose for one moment that you will publish this letter, but I felt I must protest against your direct encouragement – sheltering, as you do, under official protection – of a proposal which it seems almost certain will be the ruin of women’s hockey.’⁴²

This, the editor revealed, was just one of ‘a considerable number’ of letters she had received ‘pointing out in trenchant language the iniquitous conduct of [the magazine]... in opening its columns to an article deliberately advising the institution of hockey leagues and challenge cup competitions’.⁴³ As a result, Edith Thompson felt obliged to use one of her editorial columns to explain the relationship between *The Hockey Field* and the AEWHHA. Official notices, she said, were published ‘exactly as they are received, and are given precedence of [sic] other matter’, while editorial pronouncements ‘adhered strictly to the policy of the Association’ – beyond that, she said, ‘the AEWHHA has no control whatever’. The interests of affiliated clubs were always considered first, she added, but ‘we have to remember that a large proportion

⁴¹ M M Thomson, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 19 January 1911, 221

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 12 January 1911, 195

of our readers are school girls and members of unaffiliated clubs, and that a bare chronicle of the affairs of the AEWHHA – with no criticism permitted – would be very dull reading'.⁴⁴ Thompson described how another large batch of communications she had received on competitive hockey contained 'very little that is worth quoting, the majority being merely angry denunciation of anyone with a good word to say for the formation of leagues'. If these letters were all from AEWHHA members, it would indicate significant opposition to competitions among grassroots supporters of the governing body. That being so, *The Hockey Field* editor may simply have been trying to encourage a broader perspective by publishing the lengthy correspondence between Roalfe, Collins and Brown – although she was also obliged to give them a right of reply to the various charges and counter-charges being made. Their letters at least elicited the strength of feeling against leagues among the HA's hierarchy, and Thompson assured her readers that 'all the leading [female] players and officials are anxious to legislate as far as possible on similar lines to those adopted by the men's Hockey Association'.⁴⁵ There was, however, some disquiet within the AEWHHA about the attitude Collins had displayed towards Roalfe and Brown. This is illustrated through a skit, published in *The Hockey Field* in January 1911, in which three fictional 'hockey friends in council' – Helen Milverton, Janet Dunsford and Kate Ellesmere – discuss all aspects of the league debate. After agreeing that Roalfe was sincere in his professional beliefs and should be respected for sticking to his ideals, the women's conversation continued:

⁴⁴ *ibid*

⁴⁵ *ibid*

Milverton: I thought it a pity that Mr Philip Collins' remonstrance was couched in those particular terms.

Ellesmere: You mean 'Who is Mr Roalfe that he should' – and the rest of it?

Milverton: Yes; that method of argument always seems a little weak, and, even if justly directed, recalls 'One who aims his arrow fair, but sends it slackly from the string.'⁴⁶

No author attribution is given for this Tennyson-inspired article, but it appears to be designed to make readers consider all sides of the league argument. Dunsford, for example – having grown 'quite tragic' about the situation – exclaims: 'These leaguers would seem to say, "Adopt our ideals; give up your own; they are nothing but mere shibboleths, not to be compared with our substantial subscriptions and prizes!" It is indeed a materialistic age!' In response, Milverton asks: 'Though who is Janet that she should have such decided opinions?'⁴⁷ It is as if she is questioning whether the AEWH's unwavering stance on competitions is really the only option, and trying to counsel opinion about whether any movement would be desirable. A similar testing of the water appears to surface in some of Thompson's editorials, which – as she had pointed out – were written to reflect the governing body's official position. Even in December 1910, when readers were being alerted to the 'disastrous results' that any system of competition would have on the women's game – and being told the 'tendency of the day to demand prizes

⁴⁶ Anon, Hockey friends in council, *The Hockey Field*, 12 January 1911, 197

⁴⁷ *ibid*

upon all occasions' was a direct result of hockey being taken up 'by a different class of people... who have no tradition of good sportsmanship to uphold' – there were hints that the AEWHHA might be open to persuasion.⁴⁸

It was suggested that – if the governing body were to acknowledge leagues – it should reduce the cost of subscription to get in as many clubs as possible, and then establish junior school, senior school and women's leagues in each county. It could then be made a condition that players joining a senior league must have graduated in a school league. In this way, the correspondent insisted, the competitions would 'get a trained player who will play better hockey, and who will have been compelled to cultivate the qualities of forbearance, courtesy and broadmindedness'.⁴⁹ If *The Hockey Field* editorial was a gauge of the AEWHHA's thinking, it would seem this proposal was not dismissed out of hand by the governing body, whose objection to it was more logistical than ideological:

If such a scheme as this could ever be put into working order no doubt there would be much to be said in its favour, but the amount of organisation required would be more than any hon secretary could be expected to undertake, and up to the present very few schools have shown themselves willing to work with the county authorities.⁵⁰

An honorary (unpaid) secretary was very much the mark of an amateur organisation, but the implication here was that the work needed to implement

⁴⁸ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 8 December 1910, 115

⁴⁹ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 22 December 1910, 147

⁵⁰ *ibid*

such a scheme would require the incumbent to be remunerated. Even so, by January 1911 – and while still stating that ‘the Council very definitely refused to have anything to say to leagues at their recent meeting, and the subject is not likely to be raised again until after the summer general meeting’ – Thompson’s editorial had the rhythm of an internal debate:

Even if the council were to express themselves in favour of the innovation next winter, the sanction of the general meeting would still be required before the rule forbidding challenge cup or prize competitions could be altered. Of course, it would be possible to call a special general meeting, but it is unlikely that the proposal would meet with sufficient support.⁵¹

It ended with the declaration that ‘it would surely be better policy to try to convert those who appear to desire such things by carefully thought out arguments than hysterically to accuse them of all sorts of vaguely stated crimes against good sportsmanship’ – the AEWHHA seemingly happy to forget its own role in promulgating such hysteria.⁵²

Evidence of this new rapprochement came the following month, when *The Hockey Field* published the First and Second Division tables of what it called the ‘Northern League’ – possibly in a subliminal attempt to persuade the LHL authorities ‘that a more distinctive name should be adopted as soon as possible, “The Ladies Hockey League” being a singularly ineffective

⁵¹ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 12 January 1911, 195

⁵² *ibid*

designation'.⁵³ By the end of the season – while still 'stating quite clearly that we are most emphatically opposed to the formation of leagues of any kind in connection with... affiliated clubs' – the AEWHAs official magazine was running articles on the formation of the LHL and its positive aspects, including fewer cancelled games and an improved standard of play. 'When outside clubs see the benefit of being always sure of a match, instead of being uncertain, as at present... we shall have many more clubs joining the league,' concluded the article's author, who – although not named – was presumably connected to the LHL. As for the accusation that the league would lead to professionalism, the author countered that 'for the present, our rules are more strict... than are the AEWHAs, as players are not even allowed to have their expenses paid for them, and certainly do not receive anything for playing'.⁵⁴ 'For the present' suggests the league's organisers were open to changing this state of affairs – but whether they had hopes of turning the LHL into a commercial enterprise or simply of, one day, being able to imitate the AEWHAs and pay players' expenses is unclear. It was perhaps no coincidence, however, that the article appeared towards the end of the season, when *The Hockey Field* would cease publication for the summer; the editor was perhaps hoping to avoid another influx of angry letters to her mailbag. To this hopeful end, Thompson opened her editorial by apologising for 'again broaching the vexed question of leagues and competitions', before justifying the appearance of the article:

⁵³ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

⁵⁴ The Ladies' Hockey League, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 388

“Live and let live” is an excellent, though perhaps lazy, motto and we see no sufficient reason for endeavouring to trample on those whose views may not be quite in accord with our own. There is always, too, the annoying possibility of the trampling process being quite unnoticed by those whom we are trying to crush.⁵⁵

As members of the league had not been educated in the public school tradition, the AEWHHA continued to insist, it was ‘hardly reasonable to expect them to see eye to eye with those who have’. It praised the league’s organisation, however, and wished it well, ‘as long as its principal object is to play the game and to keep both the letter and the spirit of the rules’. Even so, it would have preferred the LHL to ‘have arranged a system of championship or tournament without prizes or medals’.⁵⁶ This seemed to imply that the governing body would tolerate a competition that resulted in a winner being declared, as long as that winner was not then rewarded – and, in 1912, it agreed to just such a league joining its ranks. An Alfred Lineham had applied to affiliate the newly formed Sheffield and Hallamshire LHL, and the AEWHHA Council recommended accepting his application on special terms and conditions, ‘provided that the said... league does not play for any cup or shield or personal or individual prizes’. This recommendation was agreed at the general meeting, despite Council member Susan Smee warning that ‘to accept leagues was opening up a very wide question and involved the danger of swamping our present system’.⁵⁷ She voted against the proposal, and

⁵⁵ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

⁵⁶ *ibid*

⁵⁷ AEWHHA Council minutes, 16 February 1912, UoB Archive A/1/4, 216-18

probably breathed a sigh of relief when it was reported at the next Council meeting that Lineham's application had been withdrawn because the league had been cancelled.⁵⁸

While the AEWHHA insisted it would like to include all women hockey players among its ranks, it believed it could 'well afford to watch with interest the experiment being made in the north. The prestige of the Association [was] not likely to suffer from the fact that these particular clubs are not affiliated, for it frankly does not cater for clubs run on these lines.'⁵⁹ Exactly what these lines were has never really been explored by sport historians – perhaps because, more than a quarter of a century after Kathleen McCrone tried and failed to find records of the LHL, documents relating to the competition remain elusive. Digital technology has made it easier to access newspaper and magazine archives, however, so these have been drawn upon to piece together a picture of the league, its teams and their players, with particular reference to the inaugural champions, Leigh LHC.

The LHL, its teams and players

Little is known about the instigator of the league, Fred A. Brown, beyond the fact that – in his correspondence with *The Hockey Field* – he gave his address as 45 Victoria Buildings, Manchester.⁶⁰ This was presumably his place of work, as Victoria Buildings was a 'well-known and desirable address for offices and shops' in the Deansgate area of the city, but what Brown did for a living is not

⁵⁸ AEWHHA Council minutes, 29 May 1912, UoB Archive A/1/4, 222

⁵⁹ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

⁶⁰ Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 12 January 1911, 221

known.⁶¹ It is also unclear why he decided to set up a women's league, rather than the men's competition for which he insisted there was demand. Several 'Browns' have been identified as playing in the pre-1914 LHL for Clifton and Gorton, but so far none has been connected to the competition's founder. It would appear, though, that some of the inaugural clubs were connected to men's sides, because Brown approached the HA to ask 'whether the ladies' section of clubs which were affiliated to the HA could join the [Ladies Hockey] League'.⁶² The governing body restated its position that affiliated clubs and their members were barred from organising or taking part in cup and prize competitions, leading one commentator in *Truth* magazine to surmise that Brown had been told:

The Hockey Association has no jurisdiction over women players... it would seem that they can *gang their ain gait* and enter if they please. On the other hand, it may be said as members of an affiliated club they cannot enter. But even as such members the Hockey Association say they are uncontrollable, and the admittedly uncontrollable cannot become controllable by joining the controllable. I do not envy Mr Brown his efforts to solve the problem that the Hockey Association has set him. Its solution, or any attempts to solve it, involve one in hopeless confusion.⁶³

⁶¹ Jonathan Schofield, *Manchester then and now: a photographic guide to Manchester past and present* (Batsford, London 2009), 13

⁶² Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

⁶³ *ibid.* 'Gang their ain gait' is a Scottish phrase meaning 'go their own way' (Dictionary of the Scots language, www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/gate – accessed: 28 April 2019)

As *The Hockey Field* pointed out at the time, the writer of this article appears to have been unaware of the existence of the AEWH, with no reference made to its identical stance on competitive play. It is not known whether Brown, as league secretary, also formally approached the women's governing body about affiliating, but he perhaps already knew that he would find the women's Council 'just as firmly determined to have nothing to say to [the LHL] as the council of the Hockey Association'.⁶⁴ The league's founding members, therefore, had no option but to *gang their ain gait*.

As already stated, only two of the LHL's inaugural clubs, Levenshulme and Altrincham St Margaret's, had ever been affiliated to the AEWH – but this does not mean the league was chiefly concerned with 'early closing' or 'working girls' clubs, which 'never have been within the jurisdiction of the AEWH'.⁶⁵ At first glance, and contrary to the impression given in the secondary literature to date, none of the 14 clubs appears to be connected to welfare, works or church organisations – save, perhaps, for Altrincham St Margaret's. This church, however, was in the nearby township of Dunham Massey, and was surrounded by the large houses of wealthy industrialists. Its vicar was the radical Reverend Hewlett Johnson, who described his parishioners as being 'as distinguished and delightful a company of industrial and professional magnates as in any parish in the land'.⁶⁶ Johnson would go on to become Dean of Canterbury cathedral, where his socialist and pacifist views earned him the nickname the 'Red Dean'. In Cheshire in 1910, however,

⁶⁴ *ibid*

⁶⁵ *ibid*

⁶⁶ Frank Bamford, 'Mansions and men of Dunham Massey: from errant earl to Red Dean', in *Altrincham History Society Journal*, No 1 June 1991, 7

he was risking 'the displeasure of his wealthier parishioners by campaigning for the improvement of their workers' housing'.⁶⁷

At what point Altrincham St Margaret's LHC came into existence is unclear, but a men's side connected to the church was playing at least as early as 1898, when they enjoyed an early-season 8-0 win over Latchford.⁶⁸ By 1908, the team was being described as 'very little removed from the first class'.⁶⁹ The women's team appeared in the AEWHA official clubs list for the first and only time in the 1909/10 season, when the secretary was named as 'Miss Litherland, of Hamon Road, Altrincham'.⁷⁰ This would have been Alice or Mabel, younger sisters of David and Alfred, who owned a local coach-building firm, Litherland Bros. The business had its central carriage works in Hamon Road, where 'cape hoods, aprons and dashes' were fitted and motor cars were 'trimmed and painted by experienced workmen'.⁷¹ According to the 1911 census, neither 27-year-old Alice nor 24-year-old Mabel were in employment.

Two other pairs of siblings turned out for Altrincham St Margaret's in the years leading up to World War One: the Misses A and R Ankers – of which no further biographical information has been located – plus Gladys and Lilian Bonson, who played at full-back and forward respectively. They were the daughters of local 'house furnisher' Godfrey William Bonson, who was born in London in 1858 and worked his way up from apprentice cabinet-maker to

⁶⁷ Sue Crabtree, Hewlett Johnson Papers: Biographical information, University of Kent Special Collections and Archives – www.kent.ac.uk/library/specialcollections/other/hewlett-johnson/biography.html: accessed: 4 February 2018. Hewlett Johnson remained at St Margaret's Church until 1919

⁶⁸ Hockey, *Northwich Guardian*, 19 October 1898, 5

⁶⁹ Hockey: A season of progress, *Manchester Courier*, 10 November 1908, 3

⁷⁰ AEWHA, Official Clubs List 1909/10, UoB Archive A/5/9

⁷¹ Patricia Southern, *The story of Altrincham* (Amberley Publishing, Stroud, 2013)

owning a large shop near the railway station in Stamford New Road, Altrincham.⁷² These premises had 'a commodious warehouse and workshop... fitted with wood-working machinery and the electric light installation', plus spacious furniture store rooms that were 'well heated with hot water apparatus'.⁷³ Bonson's business also did removals and carpet cleaning, and by 1911 he was living with his wife, Elizabeth, their seven children and a live-in maid in an eight-roomed house called Ellesmere Lodge.⁷⁴ He was elected Mayor of Altrincham in 1909, served as an urban district councillor for 15 years from 1911, and was appointed as a magistrate in 1928. Neither 18-year-old Gladys, 15-year-old Lilian or their elder sister, Emmie, are shown as having jobs in the 1911 census. When their mother – who had worked as a confectioner when she first married Godfrey – died in 1916, among the floral tributes was one from 'St Margaret's Ladies Hockey Club'.⁷⁵

While it has not been possible to verify the names of the Altrincham St Margaret's players for the inaugural LHL season, 11 women are referenced in contemporaneous match reports in the *Manchester Guardian* for the 1911/12 and 1912/13 seasons. Playing alongside those already mentioned were: E Butler (full-back); E Espin (inside-right); D Gorman; Miss Pugh; and E Street (forward). Dressed in kit of navy-blue and white striped blouse, navy skirt and white braid, the club would spend 10 seasons in the First Division of the LHL, winning the title six times between 1913 and 1920. After securing their sixth championship, the league committee recognised the team's achievements by

⁷² Census of England and Wales 1911 – Ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 February 2018

⁷³ Kath Bonson, Bonson History – www.bonsonhistory.co.uk/html/godfrey_b_1858.html: accessed 28 January 2018

⁷⁴ Census of England and Wales 1911 – Ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 February 2018

⁷⁵ Bonson, Bonson History. Gladys's first name was also Elizabeth, but she appears to have been referred to by her middle name – presumably to avoid confusion with her mother

allowing them to keep the Ramsbottom Shield.⁷⁶ The First Division trophy had been donated by a Mr R Ramsbottom, of Market Street, Manchester, who appears to have sold up a smithy and forge in 1901 to move into the motor trade – although what prompted his association with women's hockey is unclear.⁷⁷ In the first LHL season, however, Altrincham St Margaret's had to content themselves with being runners-up, as Lancashire side Leigh beat them to the title by one point.

Leigh was another club for which familial connections appear to have been important, with several sisters, brothers, cousins and fathers being involved as players or administrators. Many other founding clubs of the LHL also appear to have had siblings in their line-ups: two Taylors played for Ashton; three Browns and two Walshes represented Clifton; Levenshulme's team included two Derbyshires, two Johnsons and three Wainmans; three Shaws and two Johnsons turned out for Saddleworth; and the Mountain sisters played for Urmston Ladies. It is a task beyond the constraints of this thesis to analyse the make-up of every side in the LHL. A closer look has been taken at the women who played for inaugural champions Leigh, however, to ascertain whether the AEWhA – and sports historians to date – are justified in their assessment of 'leaguers' as working girls, only able to play hockey on Saturday afternoons.

⁷⁶ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 28 April 1920, 4

⁷⁷ Private contract, shops, goodwill in trade, *Manchester Courier*, 24 June 1901, 1; Manchester Motor Car Show, *Manchester Courier*, 23 February 1907, 10

Who were Leigh LHC?

There is nothing to suggest that Leigh were ever affiliated to the AEWhA and the governing body is not mentioned in any of the local newspaper reports about the club until the end of the 1910/11 season. Then, the *Leigh Chronicle* merely repeats the claim that the LHL was a way of dissenting from the non-competitive policy of the south-centric AEWhA, in what appears to be a syndicated account of the league's first gala. This end-of-season, prize-giving event was held on 1 April 1911 at Belle Vue, a large, open-air entertainment complex in Gorton, Manchester, which featured a zoo, an amusement park, gardens and sports facilities. The *Manchester Guardian* reported that '1,500 spectators, *mostly ladies*' watched First Division champions Leigh take on a Rest of the League (RoL) team, and Second Division winners Holyrood play a Rest of the Division (RoD) side. Like most newspapers, the daily *Manchester Guardian* may have relied on someone connected to the league to submit reports. If the attendance figure is accurate, however, it is 2.5 times the 600 members that the LHL was said to have among its 14 clubs and suggests quite significant interest in the embryonic league.⁷⁸ In addition, if the report's use of the term 'ladies' is indicative of good social standing, rather than simply being female, then women who might be supposed to, and possibly did, populate the AEWhA were being attracted to the LHL's offering.

Leigh, themselves, took 130 supporters, reserving two carriages on the 12:58 train to Longsight – one of the stations serving Belle Vue – at a cost of 1/- 6d per ticket. This included entry to the gardens.⁷⁹ Those who made the

⁷⁸ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 3 April 1911, 3. Emphasis added

⁷⁹ Hockey: Leigh Ladies at Belle Vue, *Leigh Chronicle*, 31 March 1911, 5

journey saw their team triumph 4-1 over the RoL, thanks to goals from Annie Grundy (2), Alice Gornall and Gertrude Smith, while Holyrood lost 2-3 to the RoD.⁸⁰ Afterwards, tea was served in the Chinese Café at Belle Vue, and the league trophies were presented by the Dean of Manchester, Bishop James Welldon.

Leigh had clinched the First Division title by winning their final game of the season 2-0 at home to Urmston, having lost only once during the campaign, 5-4 away to Ashton. This was despite one of their regular first-team players – Netta Jaffrey – missing the last few matches of the season through taking a six-week cruise to Egypt. Her place in the side was given to Grundy, 'heroine of the second team, who has scored about 60 goals this season'.⁸¹ Former mayor of Leigh William Harrison JP was so delighted by the team's league success that he invited them to high tea at the Midland Hotel – probably Manchester's premier hotel at this time – and then to the Prince's Theatre, where they watched the musical comedy *The Arcadians*.⁸² Harrison, whose father co-founded local agricultural machine manufacturer Harrison, McGregor & Co, was very active on the Leigh sports scene; he played for the cricket club, of which he was also president, and was involved with local football and swimming teams.⁸³ 'No better supporter of manly sports and pastimes could be found,' according to the local paper. 'His purse has always been at the call of numerous clubs, and, in addition, he has presented cups and medals and other prizes in order to encourage worthy games.'⁸⁴ His elder brother Thomas

⁸⁰ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 3 April 1911, 3

⁸¹ Leigh Ladies win the championship, *Leigh Chronicle*, 17 March 1911, 7

⁸² Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 5 May 1911, 5

⁸³ Evelyn Walls, 1908-1909, William Harrison, Mayor of Leigh, Wigan and Leigh Archives Online – archives.wigan.gov.uk/archive/civic-histories/leigh-civic/harrison-w: accessed 19 February 2018

⁸⁴ Notes and echoes, *Leigh Chronicle*, 3 March 1911, 5

was one of four (all male) vice-presidents of the ladies hockey club, while William was nominated by the women to be vice-president on the LHL – but whether this meant he was *the* vice-president of the league or merely Leigh's representative on its committee is unclear.⁸⁵ The brothers do not, however, appear to have had any family connection to the team – unlike club president Dr William George Gray, whose daughter Bertha was Leigh's captain and centre-forward. It was Dr Gray who collected the Ramsbottom Shield from Bishop Welldon on behalf of the championship-winning players, each of whom received a silver medal. The side representing Leigh at Belle Vue that day was: Maggie G Roebuck (GK); Pauline Wild, Cissie Hurst (full-backs); Annie Wilcock, Eunice Callard, Evelyne Prestwich (half-backs); Edith Peters, Alice Gornall, Bertha Gray (capt), Gertrude Smith and Annie Grundy (forwards).

Roebuck is credited with having founded the club in October 1905, from among a group of 'lady members of the Leigh cricket and tennis club'.⁸⁶ An attempt to start a women's team in the town had been made 11 years earlier, however, when the local newspaper reported that:

such clubs are very popular in the south of England, and there is no reason why a similar state of things should not prevail here. In the winter time there are not many outdoor amusements for young ladies, and occasionally time hangs heavy upon their hands, so the idea of a hockey club has been warmly taken up.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Hockey: Leigh Ladies at Belle Vue, *Leigh Chronicle*, 31 March 1911, 5

⁸⁶ News in brief: Hockey club for Leigh, *Leigh Chronicle*, 13 October 1905, 5

⁸⁷ Local and district news: Notes of the week, *Leigh Chronicle*, 16 November 1894, 5

The class of 1894 approached Leigh Cricket Club about using their field for matches, but the men decided against allowing hockey to be played, 'at least this winter, as they wish the ground to get well set against next cricket season'. Leigh Football Club, however, did offer their ground.⁸⁸ This suggests there was little opposition – from other local sports clubs at least – to women playing the game. The cricketers were only concerned about preserving the quality of their pitch, while the football club was proactive in helping to secure facilities for the fledgling women's team. The *Leigh Chronicle* did report that 'some people affect to be a little surprised, if not shocked, at the bare idea of young ladies scampering about a field and knocking a ball about with sticks'. Even so, it predicted that 'the club will go steadily on... From the enthusiasm with which the idea of a ladies' hockey club has been received it seems highly probable that the venture will be a success.'⁸⁹

The women are said to have played their first game on 5 December 1894 – a Wednesday – although no details of their opponents or the result are given.⁹⁰ There is then no reference to a team in the newspaper until late 1905, when it is reported that 'a hockey club for the ladies of Leigh has been formed and a good field secured in St Helens Road, near Aspull Common'.⁹¹ How long the original incarnation of the club lasted is unclear, but within two years of its revival it was running two teams and had inspired the formation of a men's side. On Saturday 17 November 1906 – 'in spite of wretched weather' – Leigh Ladies challenged a team of local gentlemen, who played with walking sticks, to a match on Baines's Field, Pennington. The game ended 1-1 and, four days

⁸⁸ Local and district news: Notes of the week, *Leigh Chronicle*, 23 November 1894, 4

⁸⁹ *ibid*

⁹⁰ Diary of local events for 1894, *Leigh Chronicle*, 4 January 1895, 6

⁹¹ News in brief: Hockey club for Leigh, *Leigh Chronicle*, 13 October 1905, 5

later, 23 men met in the town's Boars Head Hotel to discuss setting up a club of their own.⁹²

This light-hearted battle of the sexes was one of 11 fixtures that Leigh played during the 1906-07 season, when their kit was dark blue skirts, white blouses – with badges bearing the initials LLHC in blue on a white background – and Tam-o-Shanter caps.⁹³ In the run-up to Christmas, the club also took on Crusaders FC, a boys' football team. The youngsters' ball had burst while they were having a kickabout on a Friday night, so they played an impromptu hockey match with the women, Leigh providing the sticks. According to the local paper, 'an interesting and amusing game ended in a draw of two goals each'.⁹⁴ Other opponents that season included: Leigh Grammar School; Walkden Ladies; Urmston Ladies (another founding member of the LHL); Eccles Haven; and Lowther College, a private girls' school in Lytham St Annes.

With the exception of Lowther College, all the sides were played at home and away, and while the majority of games took place on Saturday, others were played on Wednesday or Thursday. Even during the first LHL season, with its regulated Saturday afternoon matches, Leigh Ladies scheduled two midweek friendlies against Wigan-based Scarlet Runners, who – despite being affiliated to the AEWHHA – were seemingly happy to play against a league side and risk the approbation of the governing body. The teams had also met during the previous season, when Leigh won 4-1 and declared themselves 'very proud of their victory, as the Scarlet Runners are a very good team'.⁹⁵

⁹² Hockey: men's club for Leigh, *Leigh Chronicle*, 23 November 1906, 5

⁹³ Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 18 October 1907, 5

⁹⁴ Leigh Ladies v Leigh Crusaders, *Leigh Chronicle*, 21 December 1906, 5

⁹⁵ Ladies hockey: Leigh v Wigan (Scarlet Runners), *Leigh Chronicle*, 24 March 1910, 6

The fixture with Lowther College may have come about because Roebuck, Gertrude Smith and Bertha Gray were all former pupils. At the time of the 1901 census, Smith and Roebuck were boarders at the school and were recorded as being 13 years old.⁹⁶ Gray was a few years younger, having been born in 1891, and in 1905 she and Smith passed the junior and senior Oxford local examinations respectively, both in the first division.⁹⁷ Roebuck had passed the senior Cambridge local examination a year earlier, having been 'prepared by Mr Riley BA, of Blackpool'.⁹⁸

Gray was the second of seven children of Irish physician and surgeon Dr Gray and his wife Emily, who died in January 1908 after a prolonged illness. The family lived in St Helens Road, Leigh, in a 15-room, red-brick property known as Fairfield. It included a coach house, stables and greenhouses, and had been let to Dr Gray in 1896 for the annual sum of £67'2'0. Two domestic servants lived in rooms over the driveway, on which the Grays were photographed in 1905, sitting in their motor car – one of the very few vehicles in the area at the time.⁹⁹ Bertha Gray was instrumental in helping Leigh Ladies win and then retain the LHL First Division title, but she relocated to St Annes on Sea and Lytham ahead of the 1912/13 season. It is unclear what prompted her move away, but it was later reported that she is 'becoming as popular for hockey, golf and amateur theatricals [in the coastal town]... as she was in Leigh'.¹⁰⁰ In 1915, Gray married international lacrosse player Lieutenant T.

⁹⁶ Lowther College for Girls, Lytham – www.amounderness.co.uk/lowther_college_lytham.html: accessed 29 December 2016

⁹⁷ News in brief: local students' successes, *Leigh Chronicle*, 25 August 1905, 5

⁹⁸ News in brief: success of local students, *Leigh Chronicle*, 26 February 1904, 5

⁹⁹ Thomas McGrath, Hidden histories: Fairfield, St Helens Road, Leigh, 18 May 2016 – ifthosewallscouldtalk.wordpress.com/2016/05/18/hidden-histories-fairfield-st-helens-road-leigh: accessed 30 December 2016

¹⁰⁰ Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 31 January 1913, 5

Malcom Sparkes, of the 6th Cheshire Regiment, who hailed from Heaton Chapel and shared her love of the stage.¹⁰¹

Gertrude Smith was the third daughter of Alderman William James Smith, chairman of local muslin manufacturers Gamble & Smith, The company – co-founded by his father, Thomas Holmes Smith, of Kirk Hall, Leigh – owned Brookside Mill, which had 832 looms in 1891, and Welch Mill.¹⁰² Alderman Smith was keen on sport and served as president of both the town's bowls club and its cricket club. His wife, Jessie, who died in 1896, was the daughter of Joseph Hall, of Bradshawgate, Leigh, who is described in their marriage record as a 'gentleman'.¹⁰³ On 31 January 1912, in the middle of Leigh Ladies' second title-winning season, Gertrude married Tom Greenough Hirst, 'a member of a prominent Leigh family'. He would go on to become a director of the town's Anchor Brass Works, as well as of Sutcliffe, Speakman and Co, which later bought the company.¹⁰⁴ The *Chronicle's* report of their wedding at Bedford Church describes the bride as 'a well-known member of the Leigh Ladies' hockey team', which suggests Smith had not given up playing, although her name does not appear in the paper's match reports after 1910/11.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹Wigan Council, Diary of local events 1915 –

www.wigan.gov.uk/Docs/PDF/Resident/Leisure/Museums-and-archives/archives/Leigh-Chronicle/Leigh-Chronicle-Diary-of-local-events-1915.pdf: accessed 30 December 2016

¹⁰² 1891 Cotton Mills in Leigh and Bedford Leigh, *Grace's Guide to British Industrial History* – www.gracesguide.co.uk/1891_Cotton_Mills_in_Leigh_and_Bedford_Leigh: accessed 28 December 2016

¹⁰³ Online parish clerks for the county of Lancashire, marriages at St Mary the Virgin in the parish of Leigh 1870-1887 – www.lan-opc.org.uk/Leigh/stmary/index.html: accessed 31 December 2016

¹⁰⁴ Tom Greenough Hirst, *Grace's Guide to British Industrial History* – www.gracesguide.co.uk/Tom_Greenough_Hirst: accessed 29 December 2016

¹⁰⁵ Interesting wedding at Leigh, *Leigh Chronicle*, 2 February 1912, 4

Like Altrincham St Margaret's, Leigh was a club that contained several 'hockey families' and Smith's sisters, Jessie and Elsie, also turned out for the side in the days before the LHL, as did Maggie Roebuck's younger sister, May. Alice Gornall – whose father, Richard, was headmaster of the local Church of England school – was one of twins who played for Leigh, her sister Phoebe representing the Rest of the Division team against Holyrood at the inaugural end-of-season gala. Their brother Percy was also a talented athlete, playing in goal for Bacup FC in the Lancashire Combination and signing amateur forms for Stockport County.¹⁰⁶ Leigh's half-back Evelyne Prestwich also came from a sporty family; her younger brothers Herbert and Ernest played for the men's hockey team, as well as for the town's cricket club. Their father was architect James Caldwell Prestwich, who designed, among many other buildings, Leigh's town hall, infirmary, public baths, and technical school and library, as well as several houses along St Helen's Road, where the family lived, close to the Roebucks and the Grays.¹⁰⁷ Full-back Elizabeth 'Cissie' Hurst and half-back Annie Wilcock, meanwhile, were cousins.

Hurst, who added the Leigh CC tennis championship to her trophy cabinet in the summer of 1912, was the daughter of publicans. Her father, James, owned the licence for the Fir Tree Inn in Leigh, having been born at the pub and taken it over after the death of his father.¹⁰⁸ When James himself died suddenly in 1899, aged 42, his wife, Ann Maria, took over the inn¹⁰⁹ and held the licence until around 1906, when she transferred it to a John Grundy.

¹⁰⁶ Football notes, *Leigh Chronicle*, 2 April 1909, 7

¹⁰⁷ Philip Powell and Jennifer Duggan, *Leigh Town Centre Trail*, (Wigan Council, March 2000) – leigh.life/?page=wiki&id=leighlife:ltct: accessed 17 February 2018

¹⁰⁸ Death of councillor J Hurst, *Leigh Chronicle*, 27 October 1899, 5

¹⁰⁹ Licence transfers, *Leigh Chronicle*, 8 December 1899, 5

James Hurst had also been 'a very large property owner in the district', and was well known. In addition to being on the Leigh Board of Guardians, he was a district councillor for more than 11 years, a member of St Peter's Church parochial committee, and a school manager. The day before he died, he had been nominated for election to the town council. The Hursts' house was also the headquarters of the Firs Lane Brass Band – for which James bought all the instruments – and was the meeting place for the Westleigh and Hayfield Collieries Sick and Burial Society, as well as a local branch of the miners.¹¹⁰ In 1908, Ann Maria was also elected to the Board of Guardians and, on seeking re-election (successfully) in 1910, she declared: 'My present leisure and business abilities will enable me to devote ample time and deal in a practical manner with the administration of the Poor Law... and in a ward like this [Etherstone], where there are so many in humble circumstances, individual attention to deserving cases is indispensable.'¹¹¹ By this time, Ann Maria and Cissie were living at Carlton House in Firs Lane – a new property that James had started building before his death. The 1911 census gives no occupation for either Mrs Hurst or 24-year-old Cissie, but does show that they employed two domestic servants.

Hurst's fellow full-back in the championship-winning Leigh side was Pauline Wild, who appears to be the only member of the team who worked. She was one of nine children born to builders' merchant and brick manufacturer John William Wild and his wife Margaret, and her elder brother Peter and sister Elizabeth worked as clerks in the family business. Another

¹¹⁰ Death of councillor J Hurst, *Leigh Chronicle*, 27 October 1899, 5

¹¹¹ Election addresses, *Leigh Chronicle*, 1 April 1910, 1

sister, Sarah, was a schoolteacher.¹¹² After leaving the Girls' High School in Wigan, Wild attended Liverpool Gymnasium Training College – founded by Madame Österberg protégé Irene Mabel Marsh in 1900 and later known as I.M. Marsh College – becoming a 'diplomée and gold medallist'.¹¹³ She then ran private physical education classes for a couple of years, before being appointed instructress at Leigh's Marsh Gymnasium in 1908. The gym was a gift to the town from local resident William Edward Marsh (no relation to Irene) and had been opened to great fanfare in 1903 – the same year in which one of its most famous pupils was born. Ada Smith, who began training there in 1914, was a member of the first GB women's gymnastics team to compete at an Olympic Games, in Amsterdam in 1928, winning the bronze medal.¹¹⁴ Her GB team-mate Hilda Smith (no relation) also trained at Marsh Gymnasium.¹¹⁵

Wild was appointed as an instructor of girls and women at the gym 'at a maximum salary of £60 per annum', which was £15 more than her predecessor, but less than half the £150 per year that the male instructor, William Major, was paid.¹¹⁶ By 1911, she was living with her parents and three brothers – all of whom worked in the family business – in a large, 13-roomed house just outside Leigh, called Hindley Green Hall. After winning two LHL titles, however, she decided to take a job at a gymnasium in Wigan and stopped playing for Leigh LHC – although she maintained connections with

¹¹² Census of England and Wales 1901 – Ancestry.co.uk: accessed 25 February 2018. Two of the Wilds' children died; Pauline was the fifth of their seven surviving offspring

¹¹³ Education: physical culture, *Wigan Observer and District Advertiser*, 29 September 1906, 5

¹¹⁴ Stuart Greer, Olympics star's blazer from 1928 Amsterdam games is up for auction, *Macclesfield Express*, 1 August 2012 – www.macclesfield-express.co.uk/news/local-news/olympic-stars-blazer-1928-amsterdam-2526925: accessed 13 February 2018

¹¹⁵ Leigh gymnast's 1928 Olympic blazer back in town, *Leigh Journal*, 13 September 2012 – www.leighjournal.co.uk/news/9927535.Ada_s_blazer_glory/: accessed 13 February 2018

¹¹⁶ Leigh education committee: higher education, *Leigh Chronicle*, 21 August 1908, 6; Leigh Town Council: technical instruction committee, *Leigh Chronicle*, 13 February 1903, 3

the town, returning in 1913 to judge the gymnastics competition at the Grammar School.¹¹⁷ During World War I, Wild also undertook massage work at Leigh Military Hospital, but in May 1918 she died of typhoid fever, aged just 32.¹¹⁸ Her fiancé, Archie Grove Gregory, a sergeant in the Manchester Regiment, had been reported missing in action two months earlier. In civilian life, he had been a clerk in the accountancy department of the Leigh Corporation¹¹⁹, while his younger brother, Harold, had worked with Wild as a gymnastics instructor at the Marsh Gymnasium before taking a job in Blackpool.¹²⁰ Archie's sister Gertrude, meanwhile, played alongside Wild in the 1911/12 championship-winning side.

Other players who featured for Leigh during the first two seasons of the LHL include: Edith Peters, whose family owned Glazebury corn mill; Gladys Bulcock, whose father was headmaster of St Peter's mixed primary and infants schools in the town; and Eunice Callard, daughter of the local police inspector. She left the club before the 1912/13 season to attend Bingley teacher training college in Yorkshire, the principal of which was old Girtonian Helen Wodehouse.¹²¹ At the end of her first year there, Callard won the college tennis championship and the 220-yard race.¹²²

The departure of Callard and several other players was to have a major impact on the team's hopes of making it a hat-trick of LHL titles. At the start of the 1912/13 season, the *Chronicle* reported that Leigh's ranks had been so

¹¹⁷ Leigh Grammar School prize distribution, *Leigh Chronicle*, 21 November 1913, 6

¹¹⁸ Death of Miss Pauline Wild, *Ballymena Observer*, 31 May 1918, 2. Her death was announced in the *Ballymena Observer* because one of her sisters had moved to the Irish town after her marriage

¹¹⁹ Bee's sports notes, *Liverpool Echo*, 23 May 1918, 3

¹²⁰ Gymnasium teacher's success, *Leigh Chronicle*, 1 September 1911, 5

¹²¹ Friends of Bingley College, Helen Wodehouse – <https://bingleycollege.co.uk/helen-wodehouse/>: accessed 2 February 2018

¹²² Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 27 June 1913, 5

thinned by weddings that it is questionable if they will be as strong... as in the past'.¹²³ It turned out to be an accurate prediction, even if marriage was not entirely to blame. Despite securing a new ground and, persisted the newspaper, 'some new recruits to replace those who have got married', the champions lost their opening friendly of the season, 5-0 at home to Frodsham.¹²⁴ 'This is not championship form, and a great improvement is desired,' thundered the *Chronicle*.¹²⁵ It was not to come, however, and by early November the newspaper was lamenting that 'Leigh LHC are keenly feeling the loss of several of their prominent members... They have not yet won a match.'¹²⁶ Cissie Hurst had joined Gertrude Smith in walking up the aisle just before the start of the season, marrying Nuneaton-based French teacher Edgar Hurst and moving away, but Leigh had also lost the services of Gray, Jaffrey, Wild, Callard and Gornall – not all, as outlined earlier, because of marriage.¹²⁷

A low point of the revamped team's season came in February 1913, when the champions lost 10-1 to eventual league winners Levenshulme – but even worse was to come for club founder Roebuck, who lived at The Woodlands, in St Helens Road, with her father Tom, mother Mary and siblings Ethel, May and Richard.¹²⁸ Tom was a retired grocer, having been a 'tea dealer' from nearby Atherton when he and Mary married in 1883. Mary's father, however, had been a grocer, so it appears Tom may have married into

¹²³ Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 23 August 1912, 5

¹²⁴ Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 27 September 1912, 5

¹²⁵ Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 11 October 1912, 5

¹²⁶ Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 1 November 1912, 5

¹²⁷ Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 30 August 1912, 4; Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 1 November 1912, 5

¹²⁸ Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 21 February 1913, 5

the business.¹²⁹ He went on to own considerable property in Leigh and was 'regarded as a man of substance', who – with Mrs Roebuck – was 'well-known in the borough' and 'mixed among the leading people in the district'. The couple was also prominent within Leigh parish church – where Mr Roebuck was a long-serving warden – and their son, Richard, was studying to be a dentist, his three sisters being engaged in 'household duties'.¹³⁰ This respectable, middle-class existence was shattered in March 1913, however, when the family was caught up in what the *Chronicle* headlined 'A Leigh Sensation'. Tom and Mary were arrested for shoplifting in a Liverpool general drapers store – and, while Mrs Roebuck was bound over, Mr Roebuck was given 14 days in jail. The stipendiary magistrate justified the different sentences by saying: 'Seeing that the man and woman were both together and knew what they were doing, the man becomes morally responsible.'¹³¹ The couple's solicitor said 'he could give no reasons for the offence, as Mr and Mrs Roebuck had plenty of money, and there was no occasion for them to take the things at all'.¹³²

It would have been a testing time for Maggie Roebuck, and it was no surprise – given, also, the many player departures and the team's run of poor form – that defending champions Leigh finished the season fourth from bottom of the LHL's First Division and disbanded soon afterwards.¹³³ Their occupation of the league had been short-lived but successful, and the women who had

¹²⁹ Register of marriages at St Mary the Virgin in the parish of Leigh 1870-1887 – www.lan-opc.org.uk/Leigh/stmary/marriages_1870-1887.html: accessed 29 December 2016

¹³⁰ A Leigh sensation, *Leigh Chronicle*, 7 March 1913, 4; Census of England and Wales 1911 – Ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 February 2018

¹³¹ A Leigh sensation, *Leigh Chronicle*, 7 March 1913, 4

¹³² *ibid*

¹³³ Jottings, *Leigh Chronicle*, 21 February 1913, 5

brought a modicum of reflected glory to the town were largely from among its most influential and well-known families. They were neighbours, schoolfriends and relatives, who attended each other's 'fashionable weddings' and organised sports club socials and dances. Their parents were successful business people, professionals, local politicians and upholders of the law, who involved themselves and their families in the church and charity work. With the exception of Pauline Wild – who like numerous AEWHA members was a gymnastics teacher – none of the championship-winning Leigh side was employed, while at least one was in a position to travel overseas for an extended period of time. This was not a club for 'working girls, shop girls, factory hands, etc', who could only play on Saturdays, such as the AEWHA had insisted formed the core of the LHL. There was, however, more of a social mix than perhaps members of the governing body might have considered desirable.¹³⁴ After all, just a few seasons before Leigh's first title win, a letter to *The Hockey Field* had recounted how a 'ladies' club' had refused to allow a skilled player to join their ranks because her father was in trade, and they thought themselves above playing with a tradesman's daughter.¹³⁵

Kathleen McCrone asserts that, in areas where there were insufficient players to support separate clubs of different social standing, *The Hockey Field* positively encouraged such integration 'and spoke of hockey's power to mix women of all sorts by providing them with a common interest'.¹³⁶ This, to an extent, is true, but it was far from a rallying cry for equality. For instance, in

¹³⁴ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

¹³⁵ McCrone, *Playing the game*, 134

¹³⁶ *ibid*

1911 – in response to readers' queries about where to find their nearest hockey club – the magazine suggested they might start one of their own:

It is nearly always quite easy to start a club in any small county town... provided, of course, that *the players are not too particular about their ground, nor about the social standing of all the members*. There are usually enough clergymen's daughters, doctors' daughters, governesses, school teachers, farmers' daughters and unemployed young women of the middle classes within a 10-mile radius, all of whom possess bicycles, and someone can generally be persuaded to lend a field.¹³⁷

The article could have been describing how to put together a Leigh LHC, for whom the daughters of surgeons and architects played alongside those of publicans and policemen. Its members were not independently wealthy, university alumnae brought up on the playing fields of Roedean and Cheltenham – as were many of the AEWHAs – but neither were they 'the daughters of the smaller tradesmen, clerks, and others... whose tendency is to take no exercise at all'. Such 'town girls', wrote a contributor to *The Hockey Field*, would benefit from playing the game because it would offer 'a little intercourse with some broadminded public schoolgirls who will, half-consciously perhaps... have them asking to be allowed to roll the hockey ground, and learning incidentally many other things of value'.¹³⁸ The difficulty then, concluded the writer, was that such girls might presume upon the

¹³⁷ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 9 February 1911, 259. Emphasis added

¹³⁸ EJ, A few thoughts on working girls' and other hockey clubs, *The Hockey Field*, 22 December 1910, 149

relationship and become a nuisance – a fear she thought groundless because 'very few people enjoy being where they are not wanted, and also it is always... in the power of the social superior to say "thus far and no farther"'. She added:

Leaving out all question as to who ought and who ought not to be admitted to the circle of the cultivated, apart from hockey, it is as easy and most generous to say "thus far" after a game of hockey than before it, for who would keep such a fine game from any who would play it?¹³⁹

The women who played hockey for Leigh possibly already believed they were in the 'circle of the cultivated': they enjoyed a round of golf; could hold their own on a tennis court; took leading roles in amateur dramatic productions; ran fundraising stalls for local associations and church organisations – and any fall from grace was a hard one. That they chose to play organised and regular fixtures within a league system on Saturdays did not mean they were unable to play in midweek – and, frequently, they did. While it is impossible to extrapolate from one club the social make-up of an entire league, there is little to suggest that Leigh's players were not typical of the women who took part in the early competition. This being the case, it begs the question why the AEWHHA initially chose to characterise the league as being for 'early closing' or 'working girls' clubs, which 'never have been within the jurisdiction of the AEWHHA'.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ *ibid*

¹⁴⁰ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

It may have been a deliberate tactic to dissuade any more affiliates from following Levenshulme and Altrincham St Margaret's out the door and into the LHL, the governing body banking on its members' desire to maintain social divisions being stronger than any hankering they had for points and prizes. The number of letters that flooded into *The Hockey Field* in 1910 – denouncing not only leagues, but also the editor for daring to give column inches to the subject – would suggest the AEWHHA was on safe ground with that assumption. Which may explain why it decided to change tack by the end of the 1910/11 season, to stop disparaging the LHL completely and, instead, voice the conviction that those who coveted cups could yet be persuaded of the higher sporting virtue of play for play's sake. How long this (re-)education process might be expected to take was never specified, but if the AEWHHA was hoping the new league would be a flash in the pan, it had to reassess in the years leading up to World War One.

Expansion of the LHL

The inaugural season of the Ladies Hockey League was such a success that a third tier of competition was added for the 1911/12 campaign. Division A, as the name suggests, consisted of the previous season's 'A' sides, plus the second-strings of Clarendon, Urmston Ladies and Saddleworth, plus new league member University (presumably Manchester). Undefeated Second Division champions Holyrood started their first season in the top flight, and were joined by LHL debutantes Davenport and Urmston Hockey – Clifton and Withington having dropped down a level. With three sides coming in, and only two going out, the First Division featured 11 teams in the LHL's second

season, while 10 sides battled it out in each of the other divisions. The criteria for deciding at which level teams should join the league are not known, but clubs were obviously not obliged to play their way up from the bottom. Urmston Hockey were said to be the strongest of the First Division newcomers, giving champions Leigh 'a hard game' in a 2-1 defeat on the opening day of the season before beating Clarendon 4-2.¹⁴¹ While it is unclear when the club came into existence, there is no record of them ever being affiliated to the AEWHHA – unlike Davenport, who appear in the official clubs lists from 1908/09, up to and *including* the season in which they joined the LHL.

The following season – with First and Second Divisions of 11 teams each, and a 12-strong 'A' Division – the league instigated a way for players to achieve representative honours, by introducing a 'short county tournament for the Christmas holidays'. It was to take place at Eccles Cricket Ground, with 'Lancashire' playing 'Yorkshire' on Boxing Day, and the winners taking on 'Cheshire' on 4 January.¹⁴² How the teams were selected is not clear, but Lancashire certainly had the most clubs from which to choose and chose players from Ashton, Clarendon, Levenshulme, Clifton, Hulton, Smithills, Clayton, Urmston and Raikes Park – although, interestingly, no-one from champions Leigh. Cheshire's team had representatives from Dialstone, Altrincham St Margaret's and Dukinfield, while Yorkshire was made up only of players from Saddleworth and Delph. Lancashire beat Yorkshire on 26 December, before also beating Cheshire, 3-1.

¹⁴¹ The Ladies League, *Manchester Guardian*, 10 October 1911, 11

¹⁴² Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 20 December 1912, 3

It was around this time that Philip Collins announced he was to step down as secretary of the HA at the end of the 1911/12 season. Although he would later be made a vice-president, Collins may have been looking to rein in his hockey commitments, because – as secretary of the wandering Incognita Cricket Club – he was about to be put in charge of organising, and playing in, the team's tour to America in 1913.¹⁴³ The gate money for the five, three-day matches was 'expected to be very large'; indeed, receipts had been so plentiful in the past that previous Incogniti sides had had all their expenses paid from the time they left England – perhaps another reason why Roalfe's article on sham amateurs hit such a nerve.¹⁴⁴

There was also a change of personnel at the very top of the AEWH, Frances Heron-Maxwell becoming president for the start of the 1912/13 season, despite never having held executive office within the governing body. In fact, her involvement with hockey before 1908 – when she offered the grounds of her home in Great Comp, Kent, to be used for county selection tournaments – is a little sketchy. She is said to have become captain, and subsequently president, of the West Kent Ladies Hockey Association when it was formed in 1907, and to have organised and played in goal for The Pilgrims Club, which had its home matches at Great Comp.¹⁴⁵ Heron-Maxwell would have been well into her forties by this point, however, so how active a player she was is open to debate. She had other qualities that may have propelled her to the head of the AEWH, though. Known to her friends as 'Max',

¹⁴³ A loss to hockey, *The Observer*, 8 August 1915, 14; English cricketers for America, *Athletic News*, 25 August 1913, 1

¹⁴⁴ International cricket: English team leave for America, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 27 August 1913, 8

¹⁴⁵ Joscelyne V C Turner, *Down Memory Lane*, (Platt Memorial Hall, Sevenoaks, 2016), 135

contemporaries describe the one-time secretary of the Rational Dress League as an 'ardent suffragette' a 'pioneer of women's rights', 'very outspoken' and 'unable to suffer fools gladly'.¹⁴⁶ She was 'somewhat masculine in appearance, with short cropped hair, dressed invariably in "useful" tweeds, a blouse and tie, and an old Henry Heath 'Trilby' hat'.¹⁴⁷ Hosting the county trials tournament was said to be her 'pet venture' and, intriguingly, coincided with the time when Heron-Maxwell – along with her friend Eva McLaren and Marie Corbett – set up the Forward Suffrage Union (FSU), the aim of which was to strengthen and concentrate the suffrage efforts of the Women's Liberal Federation (WLF). The new organisation was still hopeful that the Liberal government would deliver votes for women, but it fired an early warning shot about what could happen if those at Westminster did not adopt women's suffrage as one of its official measures. 'If we are driven to abstain from giving our help to official government candidates at parliamentary elections, we shall not on that account remain idle', wrote Lady Agnes Grove, chairman of the FSU's committee.¹⁴⁸ Although set up to work within the WLF, the FSU made it clear it was prepared to challenge decisions that it saw as unhelpful to the cause. In June 1908, for example – after the parent body's executive committee decided not to officially recognise the Women's Sunday March – the FSU took its own banners and following to Hyde Park to join the 250,000-strong parade demanding votes for women.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*, 135-136

¹⁴⁷ *ibid*, 132

¹⁴⁸ Agnes Grove, Correspondence: Liberal women and the suffrage, *Yorkshire Post*, 17 November 1908, 4

¹⁴⁹ Agnes Grove, Correspondence: the women's suffrage procession, *Morning Post*, 13 June 1908, 6

The involvement of hockey players in the women's suffrage movement requires its own research project and is beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice to say that Heron-Maxwell – who was also a member of the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage – was very politically active, and travelled all over the UK with McLaren to attend, and frequently address, meetings. Despite her many other commitments, however, she appears to have embraced wholeheartedly the county selection tournament, which soon established itself in the hockey calendar, with Kent's matches also migrating to Great Comp. Heron-Maxwell's home became 'a hive of hockey activity and the scene of many jolly social gatherings', and the buzz created in this corner of the country may have marked her out as a potential leader of the AEWH. ¹⁵⁰ After all, one newspaper columnist wrote, she was 'not the kind one would ever associate with failure' and 'her advent in hockey instantly imported new life to the game'. ¹⁵¹ By 1912, the tournament was a four-day event, with nearly all the players staying at Great Comp or nearby and Heron-Maxwell keeping open house. ¹⁵²

For a governing body that was losing members and facing an unfamiliar challenge to its authority, a strong personality, who could offer fresh ideas and galvanise support, would have been irresistible – especially if the AEWH was unsure in which direction it wanted to head. After all, *The Hockey Field* was reporting that the 'league movement is still going forward instead of backward, as so many predicted', and by the start of the 1913/14 season, the LHL had 36 sides battling it out for honours in four divisions of nine teams. ¹⁵³ Fred A

¹⁵⁰ Men and women of today, *Dundee Courier*, 19 November 1919, 8

¹⁵¹ *ibid*

¹⁵² Edith Thompson, Comment on the Kent tournament, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 6 November 1912, 13

¹⁵³ The Ladies Hockey League, *The Hockey Field*, 23 October 1913, 12

Brown, however, had stepped down as secretary of the league, to be replaced by the wonderfully named Urmston Ladies player Mabel Mountain. The number of affiliates listed in the AEWHAs directory, meanwhile, had fallen again, to 191.¹⁵⁴ Clubs were not necessarily leaving to join a league, but with more than 100 affiliates having disappeared since the 1908 peak of 298, the governing body's offer was evidently less than attractive to many. This may have been because it was unable or unwilling to shake off its image as an exclusive organisation that existed only to service the needs of its wealthier, southern-based clubs and players. It was a perception that would have been brought into sharper focus by the AEWHAs decision, at the start of the 1913/14 season, to send an English team on a debut tour to New Zealand. An invitation from the New South Wales WHA to take part in an Interstate Tournament in Sydney was also eagerly accepted, with *The Hockey Field* claiming the trips would be:

a splendid opportunity to open up further interest in the game and to promote friendship with our fellow players across the seas. There must be many county players in England who can well afford the time and money for the trip, and who will be glad to seize what is undoubtedly the opportunity of a lifetime.¹⁵⁵

The secretary of the NZLHA, Ethel Moore, suggested that, if the English players paid their own return fares, the host association would pick up the bill

¹⁵⁴ AEWHAs Affiliated Clubs Directory 1913/14, UoB Archive, A/5/12

¹⁵⁵ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 18 December 1913, 131

for their expenses and billeting in New Zealand.¹⁵⁶ The price of a return ticket was estimated at £100 and, with the sea passage taking six weeks each way, the players could expect to be away from home for at least six months. It would, indeed, be an exclusive band of women who could afford the time and money to undertake such a tour – and not necessarily the best players England could offer.¹⁵⁷ In the end, 14 women were chosen from among those who put themselves forward, and Old Newnhamite Catherine Gaskell was named as captain. Only one member of the team hailed from the North, however: a C Smith, of Cheshire. Gaskell would later tell Australian reporters: 'Our team is about equal to that of a fairly good English county, but it is not so strong as we thought it would be. It includes no international players; nevertheless, it is a representative team.'¹⁵⁸

The destinies of hockey

Such elitist and unmeritocratic governance of the sport was something E.W.S. believed had to change in the face of the threat posed by leagues – although she was still opposed in principle to competitions, and 'would not even except college, school or house cups and trophies, for as long as this exception is allowed affiliated clubs will certainly think themselves quite justified in playing for similar trophies'. Even so, she was of the opinion that:

to sway the destinies of hockey [the AEWH] will certainly have to become a much more democratic body than it is at present. Leagues

¹⁵⁶ AEWH Council Meeting, *The Hockey Field*, 23 October 1913, 6

¹⁵⁷ *ibid*

¹⁵⁸ English ladies hockey team: arrival at the Outer Harbour, *Daily Herald, Adelaide*, 27 June 1914, 7

are bound to come, and it is much better to acknowledge them and lead them in the right way than to let them run counter to the true spirit of the game... Other associations much stronger than the AEWHHA have been compelled to recognise leagues, and by doing so have become real powers in the world of sport.¹⁵⁹

Roalfe agreed with her on the latter point, saying that 'rugby and association football are now controlled so splendidly that the fear of professionalism is disappearing... the football associations have shown themselves able to meet all the trying developments brought about by a great league system throughout the country'.¹⁶⁰ The coach did not believe hockey had yet arrived at the same kind of stress point over amateurism, but he did consider that 'any great game... which develops sufficiently will have to go through the process', and added:

as a general rule, I do not advocate making sport a business, but when, in certain developments, it has a business side, this must be reckoned with and faced... Let us, as hockey players, look at things as they are in other similar games and make our provisions for when they arise in hockey.¹⁶¹

As stated earlier, by the end of the LHL's first season, the AEWHHA seemed to be more open to 'going through the process' of considering leagues, rather

¹⁵⁹ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 22 December 1910, 147

¹⁶⁰ Roalfe, Leagues, sham amateurism, and professionalism, *The Hockey Field*, 29 December 1910, 166

¹⁶¹ *ibid*

than condemning them out of hand. This more accommodating approach continued even as the competition expanded and, in February 1913, a match was staged between Lancashire – captained by Northern LHA secretary Florence Mack – and a side picked from the LHL. Among those representing the league at Eccles Cricket Ground were Leigh's Edith Peters and Annie Grundy, while Ashton, Altrincham St Margaret's, Levenshulme, Clifton, Hulton and Delph also had players in the side. Again, however, the selection process for the team is not known.¹⁶² The *Pall Mall Gazette*, which must have missed the earlier encounters between Leigh and Scarlet Runners, billed the match as 'the first occasion when an affiliated team [had] met one of the League teams', and it reported that there had been 'some difference of opinion as to whether such a fixture was advisable'.¹⁶³ If this was because some AEWHHA affiliates feared an embarrassing defeat, they needn't have worried: their Northern county representatives won easily, 11-1. More than the score, however, the *Gazette's* correspondent – who may well have been connected to the AEWHHA – believed the match was significant for Mack having taken the 'sensible course' and agreeing to the game. Although the author of the article states that it would be a great pity if the governing body ever relaxed its attitude towards competitions and trophies, they conceded that:

Both bodies are working for what they deem the good of the game...
the 'Leaguers' are not likely to see the error of their way if they are
merely ignored. The way to convert them to the true appreciation of
the game for the game's sake can hardly be by a policy of 'cold

¹⁶² Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 1 February 1913, 5

¹⁶³ Ladies hockey: the league system in the North, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 12 February 1913, 13

shouldering'... perhaps this friendly match may help them to realise some of the arguments against the league system¹⁶⁴

The return to the fold, through higher moral persuasion, of clubs that had been lured away by structured competition and silverware – and the conversion, by the same method, of league sides that had never been affiliated – was, then, to be the AEWHHA's preferred approach to the challenge it faced from the leagues. After all, the governing body believed the tendency of those who were new to games to demand prizes upon all occasions was 'a fault which time can cure'.¹⁶⁵ The three fictional Friends in Council were struggling, however, to sound optimistic or convinced as they voiced the concerns that many in the AEWHHA had about its ability to curtail the LHL's popularity:

Ellesmere: Supposing a considerable number of clubs join leagues and cease to affiliate to the AEWHHA?

Milverton: Then the AEWHHA would probably remain what it has always been – a sort of aristocracy of hockey – of hockey, mind – which serves the best interests of democracy, not by pandering to its weaknesses, but by maintaining high ideals, and opening its arms wide to all who are willing to conform to them.

Ellesmere: And what if there are not enough of these, and the membership of the AEWHHA does 'gradually dwindle away', which is the fate the leaguers threaten them with?

¹⁶⁴ *ibid*

¹⁶⁵ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 8 December 1910, 115

Milverton: I fancy that in such a case their motto would be, 'Better not be at all than not be noble.' But I think there are still enough loyal supporters to prevent such a catastrophe.

Dunsford: Yes; and there will be more when the result of playing for prizes has had time to show itself.¹⁶⁶

While the AEWHHA waited for the 'leaguers' to realise the error of their ways, hockey continued as usual for the two organisations. At the close of the 1913/14 season, Altrincham St Margaret's dethroned the LHL champions – and fellow former members of the AEWHHA – Levenshulme, to win the first of their six league titles. The governing body, meanwhile, was preparing to wave off the English touring side to Australia and New Zealand. The team set sail from Liverpool on 18 May 1914, on board Blue Funnel Line's SS Aeneas, which was headed for Adelaide via the Cape. The plan was then to travel through Melbourne to Sydney – where the English side would spend three weeks preparing for and taking part in the Interstate Tournament – before heading to New Zealand, arriving there on 29 July. After 10 weeks 'in the latter part', Gaskell told reporters, 'we return by different routes home'.¹⁶⁷

If a metaphor were needed to describe the distance between the AEWHHA and the 'leaguers' on the issue of competitions at this time, the fact that their foremost representatives were, literally, on opposite sides of the world to each other is probably as good as any. The governing body – perhaps realising (privately at least) that the league was catering for the type of clubs it needed to attract to remain viable – may have deemed it tactically astute to

¹⁶⁶ Anon, Hockey friends in council, *The Hockey Field*, 12 January 1911, 197

¹⁶⁷ English hockey team: first to visit Australia, *The Mail, Adelaide*, 27 June 1914, 1

adopt a 'softly, softly' attitude towards the LHL. It was still fundamentally opposed to competitions and trophies, however. Members of the northern league, meanwhile, saw no benefits to joining a south-centric organisation that appeared more concerned with encouraging the progression of an elite few than ministering to the many. Even as the AEWHHA voiced the view that its morally superior arguments in favour of play for play's sake would eventually win the day and bring about the demise of leagues, the LHL was expanding and creating new forms of competition for its members. Before either sides' position could be proved the more durable, however, Britain was plunged into war with Germany. From August 1914 to November 1918, the 'pot-hunters' and the 'purists' would be occupied by far greater concerns – and, at the end of more than four years of hardship, they would have to reassess their relationship after emerging into a society changed irrevocably by the Great War's carnage and destruction.

Chapter 3: World War One, women's work, and a false dawn of cooperation between the AEWHA and leagues

After Prime Minister Herbert Asquith declared that Britain was at war with Germany on 4 August 1914, both the AEWHA and the LHL decided to press ahead with their programmes for the coming season. The AEWHA Council agreed unanimously in late September that club fixtures should be carried out wherever possible, but that county, territorial and international matches 'be abandoned for the present'. Affiliated clubs, it said, would not be charged to continue their membership until these games were reinstated.¹ An English Ladies tour to Denmark and Germany – planned for September 1914 – was also cancelled.² The *Manchester Guardian* simply stated that 'the Ladies Hockey League have decided to fulfil their fixtures, and the season opened on Saturday [3 October]'. It then reported on a 'most surprising' 3-1 victory by Broughton over Saddleworth and carried the results of a further 10 fixtures.³

Less surprising was the fact that a large number of men's clubs had cancelled their fixture programmes even before HA vice-president Philip Collins wrote to *The Times* in early September, suggesting that all matches arranged for the coming season be cancelled. He added a rallying cry that 'the clubs affiliated to the Hockey Association in England alone must contain at least 40,000 able-bodied men'.⁴ Collins, a solicitor by profession, practiced what he preached and volunteered, becoming a lieutenant in the 7th battalion Rifle Brigade. Many other players and officials also heeded their country's call,

¹ AEWHA Council minutes, 21 September 1914, UoB Archive A/1/15

² Miscellaneous sport, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 22 August 1914, 7

³ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 6 October 1914, 3

⁴ Items of war news, *The Times*, 2 September 1914, 3

rallying to the colours in what *The Observer's* hockey correspondent – somewhat partisanly – described as 'one of the most inspiring incidents in the world of sport'. Making mention of the fact that King George V was patron of the HA, and Prince Arthur of Connaught its president, the correspondent, who went by the name of 'Captain', wrote:

Throughout the country, the keen martial spirit has been particularly observable among hockey devotees. There is hardly one hockey club that has not given a big percentage of its members to Lord Kitchener's army, and the loyalty of hockey players and officials stands second to none. No other sport perhaps, proportionately in numbers, has supplied so many recruits to the commissioned and non-commissioned ranks of the New Army.⁵

Among those recruits was the HA secretary J A Lovell (West Kent Yeomanry) and several England international players, including: full-back C S Atkin (lieutenant, Royal Army Medical Corps) – who 'has been at the front almost since the war commenced'; inside-right S H Saville (2nd Lt, New Army); R B Lagden (2nd Lt, 5th Rifle Brigade); left-half W N Riley (2nd Lt, 4th Leicesters); J Y Robinson (2nd Lt, 7th North Staffs); and J A C Croft (2nd Lt, 4th Royal Warwicks).⁶

While their male relatives and friends were busy enlisting and preparing to fight, however, it was perhaps less obvious to the women of Britain what

⁵ Captain, Hockey and the war: a great recruiting response, *The Observer*, 13 December 1914, 24

⁶ *ibid*; and Hockey players and the war, *Illustrated London News*, 23 January 1915, 610 – www.illustratedfirstworldwar.com/item/hockey-players-and-the-war-bpc000004_19150123_01_0050/#: accessed 25 March 2016

their role in the war was going to be. Vera Brittain, in her memoir *Testament of Youth*, recalls how she and the other residents of Buxton, Derbyshire, 'all suffered from the epidemic of wandering about' in the weeks immediately after Asquith's declaration.⁷ As her brother Edward and future fiancé Roland Leighton attempted to get commissions in the armed forces, Brittain – who had been due to take up a place at Oxford University when war broke out – 'took to knitting for the soldiers, though only for a short time; utterly incompetent at all forms of needlework, I found the simplest bedsocks and sleeping helmets altogether beyond me.' She then tried her hand at the first aid and nursing classes, where 'the ladies of the Buxton elite... cluttered about the presiding doctor like hens around a barnyard cock, and one or two representatives of the "set", who never learnt any of the bandages correctly themselves, went about showing everybody else how to do them'.⁸ Despite her sense of 'amused detachment', Brittain passed the elementary exams in first aid and nursing. By October 1914, however, Edward and Roland – who had already decided not to go up to university for the forthcoming academic year – were no closer to commissions than they had been in August. At this point, remembers Brittain, 'the prospect, which at moments had come near, of the war affecting me personally, seemed once again to become quite remote. So I went up to Oxford, and tried to forget the war.'⁹

This kind of 'business as usual' attitude on the home front was officially encouraged by the government of the day, so it was perhaps unsurprising that the AEWhA and LHL decided to continue with their seasons. While they were

⁷ Vera Brittain, *Testament of youth* (Virago Press, London 2004), 80

⁸ *ibid*, 81

⁹ *ibid*, 84-85

able, and chose, to carry on their leisure activity, however, female hockey players were no less keen than their male counterparts to do their bit for king and country – it was just that their opportunities for doing so were more limited. Even well-qualified women with seemingly plenty to contribute to the war effort faced rejection. Pioneering physician and surgeon Elsie Inglis, for example, offered her services to the War Office as soon as hostilities were declared, but was turned away with the words: 'My good lady, go home and sit still.' Inglis, of course, did no such thing and, instead, founded the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service, which sent medical units to France in November 1914 and Serbia in January 1915.¹⁰

Inglis and her nurses were among millions of British women who served their country at home and abroad between 1914 and 1918, doing vital, sometimes dangerous, work for which – before the conflict – they would not have even been considered. Hockey players were quick to volunteer their services, and this chapter will look at some of the roles undertaken by members of the AEWH and the LHL, as well as their wartime fundraising efforts. It will examine the extent to which hockey continued to be played during this time, and consider the relative strengths of each organisation after the conflict came to an end.

Leagues were formed in other parts of the country either during or immediately after the war, and this – together with the realisation that England's rigidly hierarchical society had been changed indelibly by the conflict – influenced the governing body's attitude towards such competitions.

¹⁰ Leah Leneman, Inglis, Elsie Maud (1864-1917), physician and surgeon, *ODNB*, 23 September 2004 – www.oxforddnb.com; accessed: 28 March 2016

In 1920, the AEWHHA allowed the LHL to affiliate on a trial basis before opening its doors to other leagues for the 1921/22 season. This entente cordiale was short-lived, however, and several leagues unaffiliated from 1927 onwards, after failing to find satisfactory accommodation within the parent body. The circumstances surrounding the leagues' inclusion in – and, then, self-exclusion from – the AEWHHA will also be examined in this chapter, as will the main areas of disagreement. Playing for points and prizes was a key stumbling block to harmonious relations, but the AEWHHA's commitment to women's self-governance – and aversion to men being involved in the running of their sport – was also a factor.

Hockey women's war effort

One of the few wartime occupations British society would countenance middle-class women doing before 1916 – when the need to recruit more men for the front intensified – was Red Cross voluntary aid detachment (VAD) nurse, and hockey players took to it with gusto. The majority of AEWHHA members 'became VADs at once', wrote Edith Thompson. 'In many cases, a hockey club turned into a voluntary aid detachment almost automatically, with the captain as commandant.'¹¹ Even before the outbreak of hostilities, future AEWHHA president Catharine Gaskell – erstwhile captain and secretary of the Cambridgeshire team – had been commandant of the 'well established' Borough of Cambridge No.8 detachment. Her unit had earned 'very hearty' approval from the War Office during an inspection by Lieut-Col Battersby, RAMC, in July 1913. It was reported that 'Miss Gaskell and her detachment

¹¹ Edith Thompson, Women and games, *The Times*, 16 January 1917, 11

deserve great credit for the excellence of their arrangements in hasty camp improvisation', having pitched a temporary hospital on farmland in Luard's Road, Cambridge.¹²

When Britain declared war on Germany, however, Gaskell was more than 11,000 miles away, leading the first English representative team to tour Australia and New Zealand. The players heard that war had broken out in Europe just after finishing their matches in Australia with an 11-3 success over an Australia representative side. 'It was impossible for them to come home then, owing to shipping difficulties,' *The Hockey Field* informed its readers, 'and they wisely determined to carry out the programme as arranged. It was the only sensible thing to do; but... they were naturally anxious to be at home and get to work with the rest.'¹³ Gaskell, it was reported, had written to the AEWAHA saying 'she finds it hard to put her heart into the business of the tour when she is longing to be with her Red Cross detachment'.¹⁴ Sadly, in early September, her anxiety to return to England was compounded by news that her father – renowned physiologist Walter Holbrook Gaskell – had died suddenly at the family home in Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire, after a short illness.¹⁵ In an article that reflected the sort of no-nonsense, stiff-upper-lip attitude of its readership – particularly now, in wartime – *The Hockey Field* commented:

¹² Red Cross Society: borough detachments inspected yesterday, *Cambridge Independent Press*, 25 July 1913, 12

¹³ *The Hockey Field*, 22 October 1914, 6

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ F H Garrison, Walter Holbrook Gaskell (1847-1914), *Science* 40 (1040), 4 December 1914, 802-805

Much sympathy will be felt for Miss Gaskell that she should have been so far away at the time... The Association owes her a deep debt of gratitude for the unselfish way in which she has put on one side her private trouble and has carried through with such signal success the difficult task with which she was entrusted.¹⁶

It would be 19 October 1914 before Gaskell and her team-mate Miss Gatey embarked on the potentially perilous sailing back to England, leaving Central Wharf, Sydney, at 4pm on board the Blue Funnel liner *Nestor*.¹⁷ Their journey, via the Cape of Good Hope, took seven weeks and the women arrived back in London just in time for Christmas.¹⁸ Gaskell immediately rejoined her Red Cross detachment and took up the role of commandant at St Chad's Auxiliary Hospital, in Grange Road, Cambridge, a temporary facility for wounded servicemen.¹⁹

In 1915, a census of 3,500 players – 'taken at the request of the Ministry of Labour' – showed that 'practically every member of the AEWhA was then employed in war work'.²⁰ The Ladies Hockey League also reported that most of its 500 members were engaged in nursing work, and the 1915 AGM agreed that league games should be continued the following season, as 'recreation on a Saturday afternoon was necessary'.²¹ It decided, however, that it was 'not

¹⁶ *The Hockey Field*, 22 October 1914, 6

¹⁷ *Nestor's* passengers, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 October 1914, 9. A Miss Robinson is included in the newspaper's list of passengers, but there is no corroborating evidence that this is the English touring team player M Robinson, of Kent

¹⁸ *Nestor* at London, *Daily Commercial News and Shipping List*, 11 December 1914, 4. The ship arrived in Gravesend on 8 December having docked at Durban, South Africa, on 14 November

¹⁹ British Empire Order: auxiliary hospital commandants honoured, *Cambridge Daily News*, 10 January 1919, 3

²⁰ Tomkins & Ward, *The century makers*, 74

²¹ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 23 July 1915, 2

advisable to accept the regular services of gentlemen referees' and, shortly afterwards, the Referees' Association suspended its activities for the duration of the war. Its secretary, J W Gleave – who had been an ardent advocate of a men's league and was secretary of the Manchester District Association – enlisted.²² Having raised £25 19s 8d from among its members for the Prince of Wales's National Relief Fund that season, the LHL also voted to continue 'copper collections' into 1916 – this time in aid of the local Disabled Soldiers' Fund – and to buy three £5 war loan vouchers from league funds.²³ In addition, some members took it upon themselves to make sure their boys on the battlefield were not missing out on bare essentials. In an appeal to readers of the *Manchester Guardian*, Withington Hockey Club captain Kitty Peacock, and secretary Winifred Michaelis, wrote that 'while numberless knitted comforts have been sent – and very rightly so – to the front, the needs of the Manchester Territorial Force in Egypt have been to a great extent overlooked. The men are greatly in need of socks.' The Division Three club undertook, therefore, to collect and forward more than 1,000 pairs of knitted woollen socks to the 7th Battalion stationed in Egypt and the Soudan.²⁴

By November 1915, *The Hockey Field* editor Edith Thompson was reporting that 'everyone is as busy as they can be these days'. Despite the inevitable wartime upheaval, however, it appears the ladies of the AEWH were still able to maintain the social distinction of playing their hockey in midweek. In response to a reader who – having moved to London – wanted to

²² Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 5 October 1915, 16

²³ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 23 July 1915, 2

²⁴ Correspondence: Socks for the Manchesters in Egypt, *Manchester Guardian*, 5 March 1915, 12

know if hockey was a good way to make friends, Thompson wrote that, indeed, it was, but:

Considerable care should... be taken to choose a club with members of the right type... if our correspondent desires to make friends, she should select a club where the members are of something of the same social standing as herself, and are likely to have the same interests. The difference between the Saturday clubs and those playing in the middle of the week is not so great as it once was... but although the midweek players can no longer be termed the 'idle rich', there is some distinction between them and the professional and business women who still keep their Saturdays for recreation.²⁵

While this indicates that games were still being organised on a regular basis as the conflict entered its second year, it also shows that times would have to get a lot tougher before England's class barriers might start to erode. Whether they played in midweek or on Saturdays, however, the commitment of women hockey players to the war effort was not always noticed or appreciated while they continued to take time out to enjoy their sport – particularly after hostilities dragged on into 1916 and conscription was introduced to bolster Britain's depleted armed forces. The need for men to be released from essential home-front duties so they could be sent to fight resulted in greater demand for women workers in the transport sector, munitions factories and agriculture. By early 1917, Viscountess Wolseley was writing to *The Times* to highlight 'the

²⁵ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 4 November 1915, 28

urgent need... for more educated women to come forward and be trained as gardeners'. 'There are in England, she continued:

many young women who are good at hockey, golf and lawn tennis. Will they give one moment's consideration to the fact that it is the produce grown on the land which gives them the vigour, energy and activity which they display in taking part in those games?... Will they, therefore, not come forward and go through a course of training as gardeners, thus releasing men for the Army and the farms?... The call of the land has come. Do not let it be carelessly pushed aside this time.²⁶

Affronted by the criticism, Edith Thompson wasted no time in penning a riposte, taking issue with the insinuation that 'girls who played golf, hockey and tennis in pre-war days are still doing little else', and pointing out that Viscountess Wolseley's call for workers 'is a very belated one'²⁷ The girls, she wrote:

who once gave up their spare time to games were, for the most part, drawn from the big public schools and universities. They were girls with plenty of health, strength and intelligence, and, as their admirably managed athletic organisations proved, girls with considerable administrative ability. They did not wait till 1917 to find work of national importance, but, with few exceptions, were all employed before the close of 1914... the land might have offered more attractions to some

²⁶ Countess Wolseley, Women as gardeners, *The Times*, 12 January 1917, 9

²⁷ Thompson, Women and games, *The Times*, 16 January 1917, 11

of these girls than the hospital had they been able to choose at the time, but they can hardly be expected to throw up their work after two years and train for something else.²⁸

Even so, some hockey players *were* already employed in food production; eight months before Viscountess Wolseley's letter appeared, eight of the first 15 women to be trained by the Cambridge University School of Agriculture had secured work on farms. The students, who lodged at Girton College, had been chosen 'for their physical fitness, some being hockey players, a few good horsewomen, and all robust and not easily fatigued'. All the women, it was stated, are out before breakfast – 'those who work horses are up at 5.30am. Those who milk start work at six. The remainder are up at seven to feed pigs etc. Practically all are in favour of the short skirt with breeches, gaiters and stout boots.'²⁹ The *Daily Mirror*, meanwhile, reported on the 'novel tasks of two ladies, formerly hockey players', who – since September 1915 – had been working on a farm in Essex. Miss M G Gowing – 'captain and honorary secretary of the Norfolk County Ladies Hockey Club' – and her team-mate D L Coleman were tending and feeding bullocks for the Christmas market, carting roots and chaff cutting, mangold pulling and potato picking, and acting as drovers when the farm's cattle were sent to market. 'Miss Gowing is the best drover I've got and I do not want better hands than either of them,' the foreman told the paper. 'If there is a bullock to round up they can run faster than I can.'³⁰ The two women, said the *Daily Mirror*, had 'justified the hockey

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ Women's farm work at Cambridge, *The Times*, 17 April 1916, 10

³⁰ Women doing men's work on farms, *Daily Mirror*, 15 December 1915, 10. The women also feature in photographs that appeared on page 4 of the *Daily Mirror* on 11 December 1915

girl, for to their strict training at that game may be attributed much of their ability to work long hours in cold and rain and mud'.³¹

The sportswoman's stamina, strength and physical prowess, which had frequently been derided or denounced as unfeminine – if not downright injurious to her chances of marriage and motherhood – were now recognised as invaluable in the nation's battle to feed its people. 'The land offers work to the woman who is unfitted for laborious munition work or for hospital or for clerical work,' readers of the *Manchester Guardian* were informed. 'It is a challenge to the out-of-door girl, to the girl who has been brought up on hockey.'³² With this in mind, Bertha La Mothe – 'woman agricultural adviser to the Board of Trade (BoT)' – attended the AEWHA Council meeting at the Emerson Club, in London's Charing Cross, on 21 November 1916.³³ She was probably invited by Frances Heron-Maxwell because – four weeks earlier – La Mothe had addressed a meeting of the West Kent Women's War Agricultural Committee, of which the AEWHA president was a member. Headed by Viscountess Hardinge, the committee had discussed the need to recruit and train large numbers of women during the winter months, so they would be ready to 'assist in cultivating and in gathering in crops in 1917'.³⁴ What better way to do this than by tapping into an organisation whose members were physically fit, able to work as part of a team and always keen to learn new skills? La Mothe informed the AEWHA Council that educated women were

³¹ *ibid*

³² Madeline Mason, Women and the land: the work and the training, *Manchester Guardian*, 20 April 1917, 10

³³ AEWHA Council minutes, 21 November 1916, UoB Archive A/1/15. La Mothe's exact job title is unclear. She is variously referred to in newspaper articles as being from the employment department of the Board of Trade or from the women's department of the Board of Agriculture

³⁴ West Kent Women's Agricultural Committee, *Kent and Sussex Courier*, 3 November 1916, 5

needed on the land, with 'over 1,000 to act as forewomen being required at once'. The executive resolved to 'do all in its power to back up a special appeal to be issued by the Board of Trade... and write a letter calling upon hockey players to come forward'. The letter was to be issued by the BoT with its appeal.³⁵

By February 1917, the West Kent committee was meeting weekly to 'carry on the detailed work' of increasing food production under the National Service Scheme.³⁶ Heron-Maxwell headed up its village gardens and allotments subcommittee and, later, joined the provisional executive of the Kent Federation of Allotment Holders.³⁷ The fruit of all their labour, as it were, was shown off to 'thousands of interested persons' at a farm near Maidstone in November 1917, when the West Kent committee organised a 'comprehensive series of tests of efficiency and demonstrations of agricultural work by women and girl workers'. These encompassed everything from 'heavier farm work with horse and plough' to 'lighter duties appertaining to poultry and small village industries'.³⁸ Chairman of the committee Heron-Maxwell – who was supported in her role by the secretary, Vera Cox, a fellow AEWA official – reported that about 9,000 women had registered as land workers in Kent, and between 200 and 300 were in the Women's Land Army. She added:

³⁵ AEWA Council minutes, 21 November 1916, UoB Archive A/1/15

³⁶ West Kent Women's Agricultural Committee, *Sevenoaks Chronicle*, 23 February 1917, 3

³⁷ Kent Federation of Allotment Holders, *Sevenoaks Chronicle*, 23 November 1917, 5

³⁸ Women and agriculture: test and demonstration at Maidstone, *Sevenoaks Chronicle*, 30 November 1917, 3

Some people had been incredulous of [women] being able to carry out ordinary farm work, hence the demonstration was to show them their mistake. Another object was to establish a standard of efficiency so that farmers would know the kind of labour they were engaging when taking women into their employ.³⁹

To free up even more men for combat from 1916 onwards, the government eventually recognised that women could also be useful serving in support roles – such as cooks, clerks, telephone operators, store-women, drivers, printers, bakers and cemetery gardeners – with the armed services in the UK and overseas. As a result, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) – later renamed the Queen Mary Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC) – was formed in 1917, headed up by Mona Chalmers Watson, the first president of the Scottish Women's Hockey Association.⁴⁰ It was followed by the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) and, in 1918, the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF). Nearly 40,000 women had enrolled with QMAAC by 1918, 7,000 of whom served on the Western Front, while the remainder were deployed in the UK.⁴¹ Future president of the AEWHA Edith Thompson was assistant chief controller of inspection QMAAC from 1918 to 1920, having previously served as a VAD nurse.⁴² She was made a CBE for her war work, while Heron-Maxwell – who joined the inaugural committee of the West Kent Advisory Agricultural Committee in June 1919, to keep up the level of farming in the county⁴³ – was

³⁹ *ibid*

⁴⁰ WAACS at war, National Army Museum – www.nam.ac.uk/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/waacs-war: accessed 28 March 2016

⁴¹ *ibid*

⁴² Cheryl Law, *Women: a modern political dictionary*, (I B Tauris, London 2000), 147

⁴³ West Kent Advisory Agricultural Committee, *Kent and Sussex Courier*, 20 June 1919, 9

appointed an MBE. Catherine Gaskell, whose temporary nursing facility for wounded servicemen in Cambridge closed in the spring of 1919 – 'after being open for four years all but five days'⁴⁴ – was also appointed MBE for 'services in connection with the war',⁴⁵ as were fellow AEWHAs officials Mary Simpson and Vera Cox. Simpson had been an assistant secretary of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Family Association, and was later assigned to the Land Army as a regional organiser. 'It was known that she could deal with young women, that she could organise, and that she knew the needs of the countryside.'⁴⁶ For one year, she took the secretaryship of the Northamptonshire Nursing Association, then transferred to the Women's Institute (WI), where – in 1920 – she was appointed regular organiser of its National Federation for the Midlands. It was here that her experience with the AEWHAs perhaps came to the fore, as Simpson's task 'was to give teaching in self-government [sic], then a new thing for village women'. According to Inez Jenkins, a historian of the WI: 'Miss Simpson's approach to institute work was simple and forthright. Difficulties were solved in a brisk, practical way. Petty-mindedness could make no sort of showing against her own honesty and candour. Personal embarrassments disappeared in the light of her sound common sense.'⁴⁷

While the majority of women involved in war work carried out their duties in the relative safety of the home front, many were employed close to the frontline – and some paid the ultimate price. Daisy Coles, a VAD nurse and 'well known as a hockey and golf player in Edinburgh', was killed by

⁴⁴ Borough Red Cross, *Cambridge Daily News*, 14 May 1919, 4

⁴⁵ British Empire Order: auxiliary hospital commandants honoured, *Cambridge Daily News*, 10 January 1919, 3

⁴⁶ Helena Deneke, Mary Helen Simpson MBE of Chelveston 1871-1947, Rushden Research – www.rushdenheritage.co.uk/Villages/people/simpson-chelveston.html: accessed 19 March 2018

⁴⁷ *ibid*

enemy aircraft in the autumn of 1917, having left for France in June 1916. She was the only daughter of Walter G Coles, chief surveyor to the Board of Agriculture for Scotland, and her only brother, Captain Lionel Coles, was killed at the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916.⁴⁸ Another VAD, Sophia Violet Barrett – 'a first-class tennis player, being also proficient in croquet, hockey and golf' – was killed on 10 October 1918. Originally from County Galway, she had been working as a nurse in France for two and a half years, and was returning to her duties onboard *RMS Leinster* when it was torpedoed by a German submarine. Barrett had been mentioned in dispatches in January 1918.⁴⁹ Also among the war dead were former England captain Harold Charlton Boycott – a lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards, who was married to fellow international hockey player R E Green, and Philip Collins.⁵⁰ The one-time secretary of the HA was killed in Flanders on 30 July 1915, aged 33.⁵¹

Undoubtedly, these nurses and soldiers were not the only hockey players to die during the conflict, and the sport's military and civilian contribution to the war effort – at home and abroad – deserves greater exploration than can be afforded it in this thesis. There is evidence that hockey was played by some of the nurses and patients at field hospitals in France to help with soldiers' rehabilitation, while numerous appeals were made for sticks and equipment to be donated for use by soldiers in their recreation time. In November 1914, for instance, *The Times* reported that 'hockey sticks are needed for the use of the Indian troops at the base camp'⁵² and, six months

⁴⁸ Fallen officers, *The Times*, 6 October 1917, 5

⁴⁹ Fallen officers, *The Times*, 22 October 1918, 4

⁵⁰ The casualties: English hockey captain killed, *Manchester Guardian*, 26 March 1918, 8

⁵¹ Fallen officers, *The Times*, 5 August 1915, 9

⁵² Naval appointments, *The Times*, 28 November 1914, 5

later, the newspaper informed its readers that 'outdoor games are needed for the amusement of the men at the [YMCA] base camps' in France. It then appealed for 'cricket bats and balls, steel quoits, footballs, hockey sticks and balls, boxing gloves, [and] old badminton sets' to be donated via the Princess Victoria's Auxiliary Committee.⁵³ It is the sport's continuance in England during World War I that is more pertinent to this study, however.

Hockey in England 1914-1918

In her response to Countess Wolseley's barely-veiled criticism of sportswomen's commitment to the war effort in early 1917, Edith Thompson claimed that the only official games of hockey or lacrosse that had taken place since the start of the war – outside of schools or colleges – had been four charity matches arranged by the AEHWA and the Ladies' Lacrosse Association. In March 1915, an English international hockey team beat the New Zealand touring XI 9-0 at Richmond, Surrey, while – the following year – a team of past and present internationals won 4-2 against a side of international reserves and territorial players.⁵⁴ The games, Thompson said, had been 'in aid of the Star and Garter Fund and the Scottish Women's Hospitals, when the number of spectators in VAD uniform was very noticeable'. Even in schools, she added, 'games are almost in abeyance'.⁵⁵ Sara Burstall, headmistress of the Manchester High School for Girls, had recently joined the debate about whether pupils might be more usefully employed on a Saturday morning than in running around a hockey field. In

⁵³ YMCA base camps in France, *The Times*, 6 May 1915, 11

⁵⁴ Sports in brief, *The Times*, 22 March 1915, 12; Sports in brief, *The Times*, 27 March 1916, 6

⁵⁵ Edith Thompson, Women and games, *The Times*, 16 January 1917, 11

January 1917, she told a meeting of the Association of Assistant Mistresses that 'girls had "made good" in the hospitals, in the laboratories, the farms, banks, offices and government departments. They were there to stay, and there would be room enough and work enough for them and for men for many years to come'. However, Burstall suggested Saturday morning school hockey be abolished in favour of marketing [gardening] and kitchen work. 'If time was to be made for the compulsory military training of men there would have to be time found for girls [sic] for their corresponding domestic training.'⁵⁶

Thompson – while keen to emphasise the patriotic lead being given by the AEWhA in limiting 'official games of hockey' – nevertheless defended the right of girls and women to play their sport in war time:

Perhaps the time would be more usefully spent in gardening if the girls were properly taught and kept busy; but one game a week in the open air does not seem an undue allowance, and even in war time there is no need to make poor Jill a duller girl than necessary. She has no satisfactory equivalent to Jack's OTC [Officers' Training Corps], which enables him to obtain fresh air and exercise with a patriotic flavour.⁵⁷

It is impossible, however, to verify how many AEWhA-affiliated clubs continued to arrange fixtures between August 1914 and November 1918. Their practice of playing only 'friendly' games meant there was no central organisation – such as a league – to publish match details or record results. *The Hockey Field* did carry appeals for fixtures and the results of games,

⁵⁶ Hockey or home work, *The Times*, 6 January 1917, 10

⁵⁷ Thompson, Women and games, *The Times*, 16 January 1917, 11

submitted by club secretaries. By 1916, however, the magazine – having gone from being a weekly to a monthly in 1915 – was 'but a four-page sheet appealing for "all able-bodied women who are not already engaged in war work of real importance to consider whether they are willing to take up work on the land for the duration of the war".⁵⁸ AEWHA AGMs also went into abeyance after 1916, although the Council still appears to have met when necessary. The extent to which the game continued to be played within the Ladies Hockey League, however, can be gleaned from its published tables.

In the season immediately before the war, 36 teams had battled it out for honours in four divisions of nine teams, with Altrincham St Margaret's sealing the First Division title.⁵⁹ By the start of the 1914/15 season, the number of teams had reduced to 26, from 18 clubs, competing in three divisions – although it is unclear whether sides withdrew from the competition because of the outbreak of war or, like Leigh LHC the season before, simply disbanded because of other factors. The First Division consisted of: Altrincham St Margaret's, Broughton, Clarendon, Delph, Holyrood, Oldham, Rochdale (members of the AEWHA up until 1913/14), Saddleworth and Urmston. Eight teams made up the Second Division – former AEWHA affiliate Eccles, Gorton, Middleton, New Mills, Raikes Park, Saddleworth A, Sedgley Park and West Point – while the Third Division was populated by 'A' teams from Broughton, Clarendon, Delph, Eccles, Holyrood, Oldham and Urmston, plus Manchester Day Training College Past Students (MDTCPS) and Withington. Altrincham St Margaret's lost only one game on their way to retaining the First Division title,

⁵⁸ Tomkins & Ward, *The century makers*, 35

⁵⁹ The Ladies Hockey League, *The Hockey Field*, 23 October 1913, 12

unbeaten Raikes Park finished top of the second tier, and MDTCCPS won the Third Division championship. 'Considering the many difficulties caused by the war,' reported the *Manchester Guardian*, 'the season has been most successful, and out of a total of 200 matches arranged, only eight have been cancelled.' Whether these matches were rearranged or there was a system for deciding results and allocating points for them is unclear, but the published tables show a full complement of games played for each team. In total, 910 goals were scored, with champions Altrincham claiming a league record 100 of these while conceding only 18. Their forward E Espin was prolific in front of goal, netting 63 times for the club and scoring eight more in two representative games.⁶⁰

At the league's AGM that summer, it was decided that fixtures should continue the following season. Most of the LHL's members, it was explained, were engaged in nursing work and 'recreation on a Saturday afternoon was necessary'.⁶¹ It was a decision applauded by *The Hockey Field*, in an editorial that reinforced the AEWH's pre-war determination to 'live and let live' and not 'to trample on those whose views may not be quite in accord with our own'.⁶² It read:

The Ladies' League in the Manchester District is continuing its prosperous career, not by any means unconcerned by present conditions, but in spite of them. Like sensible people, the members, nearly all of whom are at work (either war work or earning their living,

⁶⁰ Ladies Hockey League: end of season, *Manchester Guardian*, 6 April 1915, 8

⁶¹ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 23 July 1915, 2

⁶² Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

or in many cases both) are determined to find time for a little play too, and they somehow manage to keep their Saturday afternoon free.⁶³

Clarendon and Holyrood dropped down from the First Division for the 1915/16 season – making way for Second Division champions Raikes Park and Gorton – while New Mills and Saddleworth A were relegated from the second tier, to be replaced by MDTCPs and Urmston A. Oldham were no longer able to field an A team, so their place in the Third Division was taken by LHL debutants Castlemere A, whose first team went straight into the division above. There they were joined by another team new to the league – Swinton Park. This meant the top and bottom tiers had nine teams each, and the Second Division 10. Despite this slight expansion of the LHL – to 29 teams from 20 clubs – the AGM was told that the committee had the power to increase the competition further for the forthcoming season, and it invited applications to be made to the secretary, Mabel Mountain. It also agreed that the LHL should adopt 'the AEWHA system of referees' after the ruling council recommended that 'as, during the war, it is not advisable to accept the regular services of gentlemen referees... two referees officiate at each match... the home and visiting teams each to be responsible for one referee for each match'.⁶⁴

As the war entered its third year – and Britain's demand for men at the front increased, exponentially, the workload on women – the capacity of some clubs to continue playing hockey diminished. At the start of the 1916/17 season, the LHL announced that it would only run two divisions, with 13 teams in the First and nine in the Second. Middleton, New Mills, Raikes Park and

⁶³ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 21 October 1915, 4

⁶⁴ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 23 July 1915, 2

West Point all withdrew from the league – as did the first and A teams of both Castlemere and Delph – while Holyrood fielded only one 'A'-standard team in Division Two. They were joined at this level by Pendleton, while Dialstone re-entered the LHL after a two-season absence and were joined in Division One by new side Alma Park. This team was probably made up of nursing staff from Alma Park School in Levenshulme, which had been requisitioned for use as a military hospital in April 1915. Such exacting war work was certainly having an impact on the league programme by Christmas 1916, and it was reported that 'some clubs have been very badly hit on account of Red Cross duties'. Despite this, however, 'the play has been kept at an excellent standard, and there have not been many runaway victories'.⁶⁵ There must have been a few, however, because reigning champions Altrincham St Margaret's scored 172 goals in 24 matches – and still didn't win the title, having lost twice and drawn two games. They were pushed into second place by unbeaten Broughton, who themselves scored 136 goals. MDTCPs, meanwhile, netted 120 times in 16 matches en route to winning the Second Division title by seven points, ahead of Withington.⁶⁶ The winners were presented with their trophies at the LHL's annual gala, which also acted as a fundraiser for the East Lancashire Disabled Sailors' and Soldiers' Homes. Despite unsettled weather, a large crowd turned out at Kersal cricket ground to watch the league's end-of-season celebration, which – for the first time – took the form of a knock-out competition. Over the

⁶⁵ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 2 January 1917, 7

⁶⁶ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 10 April 1917, 2. It appears First Division teams played each other three times this season, while Second Division sides met each other twice

course of four hours, 21 teams were whittled down to two, with Broughton beating Urmston 1-0 after extra time in the final, to take the honours.⁶⁷

While playing hockey was a way for women to maintain some normality – as well as their fitness for physically demanding work – the impact of the conflict on this and every other aspect of their lives became increasingly acute as the war continued into its fourth year. In March 1918, the *Manchester Guardian* reported that:

Some difficulty may arise with one or two clubs in the Ladies Hockey League to play their remaining matches, as the Food Production Committee have already commandeered two grounds. This difficulty was experienced at Dialstone on Saturday, and their match with Broughton had to be cancelled. The Eccles ground, too, has been taken over, but it is understood that the authorities have sanctioned the playing of the remaining three games.⁶⁸

Even so, the league made it through another season, with undefeated Altrincham St Margaret's regaining their Division One crown and Gorton taking Division Two. It was decided – after the success of the inaugural gala knockout competition in 1916/17 – to hold another on the 'Manchester United football ground', again in aid of the Disabled Sailors and Soldiers. The *Manchester Guardian* reported that the progress of the different rounds of the 25-team knockout competition was followed keenly, and that 'a popular result was the

⁶⁷ Ladies Hockey League and Disabled Sailors and Soldiers, *Manchester Guardian*, 16 April 1917, 2. Kersal Cricket Ground would become the home of rugby football club Manchester FC and is currently used by Salford City FC. The gala raised £102 for the charity (*Manchester Guardian*, 25 September 1917, 10)

⁶⁸ Ladies Hockey League: grounds and food production, *Manchester Guardian*, 5 March 1918, 10

defeat of St Margaret's... by Rochdale in the semi-final' – indicating that the tendency to cheer on the underdog and delight in the downfall of perennial winners had taken root among LHL spectators. Rochdale went on to beat Swinton Park in the final, 1-0, and were presented with their trophy by the Mayoress of Salford, president of the league. An appeal was then made to all present for landworkers for the coming summer months.⁶⁹

The Champions v Rest of the League matches were postponed until the following week and, interestingly, were staged at two different venues – Second Division champions Gorton taking on their divisional opponents at Manchester Athletic Ground, and Altrincham St Margaret's suffering another shock defeat, 6-4, at Swinton Park. Afterwards, there were signs that the relationship between the AEWHA and the LHL was shaping to take a more conciliatory path once global hostilities had ceased, with Edith Thompson – in her capacity as chief inspector of the WAAC – presenting certificates to the finalists of the knock-out competition, Rochdale and Swinton Park. She then addressed the crowd and:

told some interesting and amusing incidents connected with her duties, and said although some complaints had been made about the morals and manners of the WAACs, no complaints had been made about the excellent work that they were doing, and she could say with assurance that their work was greatly appreciated.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Ladies Hockey League: Rochdale's success, *Manchester Guardian*, 30 April 1918, 8. Again, the venue for the tournament would have been the home of rugby football club Manchester FC

⁷⁰ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 7 May 1918, 8

Her comments are an indication that women from different social backgrounds – with varying knowledge of, or regard for, social niceties – were being thrown together by the necessities of war. And women such as Thompson, who might once have baulked at the dropping of standards, were now less judgemental, having gained insight into and admiration for the hard work, skill, determination and courage that all women were showing during wartime. Again, however, the fact she was telling such anecdotes at an LHL event would suggest the audience was drawn from a class of women whose morals and manners would never be brought into question, and who would not see themselves reflected in Thompson's amusing stories.

By the 1918/19 season, the league – which had expanded slightly and been reorganised, into two divisions containing 28 teams from 20 clubs – appeared to be becoming more socially diverse and had started to feature teams obviously connected to workplaces or welfare organisations. Westinghouse, for instance, was a subsidiary of an American company that made gas and steam engines, as well as electrical products – and, at this time, was being used to produce small petrol-electric locomotives for the War Department Light Railways. The Pioneer team, meanwhile, were probably connected to the consumer co-operative group the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers. More analysis is needed, however, to determine the social backgrounds of the women who played for these teams; as Catriona Parratt has pointed out when writing about sports teams at Rowntrees, 'the female membership of these clubs appears to have been limited to office staff and members of the Social Department. This de facto exclusion of the vast majority of... workers reflected and reinforced the deep and systematic divisions of

gender, class and occupation that shaped the firm's culture'. Production-line workers, she added, 'lacked the cultural, material and physical resources for sport. These women were vastly under-represented in the Rowntrees tennis, cricket and hockey teams.'⁷¹

While social barriers were possibly being lowered in what turned out to be the final season before the end of the war, the LHL also branched out into interleague matches. Home and away fixtures were organised with the newly organised Bolton League. What didn't change, however, was Altrincham St Margaret's dominance of the competition; they lifted their fifth First Division title, while Tyldesley triumphed in the Second Division. The knock-out competition continued its evolution and was staged over two rounds in early April – the first of which 'produced some surprises', with both divisional champions being eliminated at Kersal cricket ground. 'It is interesting to see,' wrote the *Manchester Guardian*, 'no fewer than 10 Second Division clubs in the second round.'⁷² The final, however, turned out to be an all-First Division affair, with Saddleworth beating Urmston 2-0 a week later, at the Manchester Athletic Ground. They were presented with their trophy by the LHL president, Miss A M Jackson, who congratulated the league officials on carrying on through the now-ended war. 'It had been a struggle,' she said, 'but it had improved the physique of the girls and had also helped the Disabled Sailors' and Soldiers' Fund.'⁷³ The league was hoping to extend into Yorkshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire for the 1919/20 season, and secretary Mabel Mountain urged clubs who, at the beginning of the war, had had to resign from

⁷¹ Parratt, *More than mere amusement*, 210-11

⁷² Ladies Hockey League: knock-out competition, *Manchester Guardian*, 15 April 1919, 4

⁷³ Ladies Hockey League: annual gala, *Manchester Guardian*, 29 April 1919, 4

the league, to get into immediate communication with her. As Britain adjusted to peacetime, the LHL expected to run four divisions again – and, it was being reported, 'the All of England Women's Hockey Association [sic] may take an interest in league hockey shortly'.⁷⁴

AEWHA and leagues: the post-war relationship

It was true that in April 1919, at the AEWHA's first post-war AGM, Edith Thompson had urged those gathered in Perivale to consider that 'hockey leagues within the association be formed or allowed'. In addition, president and chair of the meeting Frances Heron-Maxwell 'showed how such a step would help hockey generally in every way' and she warned that 'if the leagues were not accepted, in all probability the various league club members would outnumber those of the AEWHA'.⁷⁵ It is not clear how Heron-Maxwell showed that such a step would help hockey in every way, but the foundation of additional leagues during the war may have fuelled her concern about the 'pot hunters' gaining a numerical advantage over the governing body. A 14-team competition centred on Bradford had been in existence since at least the start of the 1917/18 season, while 21 teams – spread across three divisions – were battling it out for honours around Leeds in 1918/19. Efforts were also ongoing to create a league for the Sheffield and Rotherham districts. Just weeks before the AEWHA AGM, the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* reported that: 'Similar competitions have been extremely successful at Bradford and in Lancashire,

⁷⁴ Ladies Hockey League: end of season, *Manchester Guardian*, 6 May 1919, 9

⁷⁵ AEWHA AGM minutes, 26 April 1919, UoB Archive A/2/3

and it is thought that there would be a successful future for one in South Yorkshire.⁷⁶

Perhaps mindful of the league's false start in 1912, however, the paper was cautious about the prospects for the new venture. 'Inquiries have not so far revealed any great enthusiasm for the project,' it declared, 'possibly owing to the [hockey] year being so far advanced.'⁷⁷ Even so, by 1 May, the yet-to-start Sheffield League had chosen a representative side from three clubs – Darnall, Rotherham and Leopold – to accept a challenge from the Bradford League.⁷⁸ They were denied a chance to show their potential, however, when Bradford cancelled the fixture because their best players 'are engaged in three finals during the next fortnight... and consequently would not be able to turn out in a hard game immediately before these matches'.⁷⁹ Despite this minor early setback, the *Sheffield Independent's* correspondent believed that hockey in the area was only heading in one direction, and he warned that:

the AEWHHA will certainly have to contemplate a further thinning of its ranks if it does not move with the times, for it is evident that the democratic end of the game will have its competitions whatever the governing body may say. The number of unaffiliated clubs is in the majority, and there is serious missionary work to be done by the parent body in the North if it means to keep control of the game.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Hockey: proposed local league for ladies, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 9 April 1919, 7

⁷⁷ *ibid*

⁷⁸ Sheffield Ladies' team to meet Bradford, *Sheffield Independent*, 1 May 1919, 6

⁷⁹ The Bradford v Sheffield game postponed, *Sheffield Independent*, 3 May 1919, 10

⁸⁰ Penalty Corner, League hockey in Sheffield, *Sheffield Independent*, 8 April 1919, 6

Support for the proposed Sheffield League came from some unexpected places, including British Army of the Rhine GHQ in Cologne, Germany. There, Sapper A Gosling – a former secretary of Attercliffe Parish Church HC – was being 'kept well acquainted with my favourite sport', and he believed there were many things to be taken into consideration before the league could be successfully carried out. 'This is a ladies' enterprise,' he acknowledged in correspondence with the *Star Green 'Un*, 'but I am afraid they would be better satisfied if a few men would take responsible positions and interest themselves in this proposed scheme. Another great point not to be missed is the necessity for good referees, again preferably the males'.⁸¹ In a response that would have had the independent-minded women of the AEWHHA rolling their eyes, the secretary of the league – Eva Binsted – said 'she and her friends were very glad to see Sapper Gosling's proposal' and that they 'would be greatly pleased if some gentlemen would offer assistance, as it would facilitate matters to a great extent'.⁸² Her latter comment was probably less of an admission that women could not organise themselves than that men might more easily access facilities; hockey, the local newspaper reported, was very popular in Sheffield, in spite of the difficulty of obtaining suitable grounds.⁸³

Whether men, ultimately, had much input, a 10-team league was launched in the Sheffield district for the start of the 1919/20 season, while a competition was also being mooted for Burnley. A 'lady contributor' to the local paper reported that hockey was fast becoming popular in the town, with several Sunday school sides in addition to the 'well supported' Carlton Ladies

⁸¹ Some ideas from the Rhine: Ladies Hockey League, *Sheffield Star Green 'Un*, 28 June 1919, 2

⁸² Help wanted from the men, please!, *Sheffield Star Green 'Un*, 12 July 1919, 2

⁸³ *ibid*

Hockey Club. 'Perhaps in the near future one may see the formation of a Burnley Ladies Hockey League. Why not?'⁸⁴

In contrast to all this activity in Yorkshire and Lancashire, the post-war Home Counties were finding that 'contrary to expectations, hockey [was] reviving very much less quickly than other sports'. In a statement that indicates that the socially exclusive mindset of English hockey had emerged relatively unscathed from four years of global conflict, the *Hampshire Advertiser* reported 'considerable activity among the class from which factory and munitions workers are drawn', but that the 'better class clubs have not yet got into their stride'.⁸⁵ Indeed, Columbines – one of the founding members of the AEWhA and 'one of the leading and most prosperous of London clubs' – had folded because it could only muster seven players. The *Advertiser* informed its readers that: 'Miss K McKane and her sister, Miss Hawkins and Miss Ryan, all of whom had intended taking up hockey as members of the Columbines, have changed their minds, and will probably be going to the Riviera for the tennis season there.'⁸⁶ It proved to be a wise sporting choice by the McKane sisters and Miss Ryan. Kathleen 'Kitty' McKane (later Godfree) went on to win seven grand slam singles and doubles titles, and five Olympic medals in Antwerp (1920) and Paris (1924). She and Margaret McKane (later Stocks) also reached the doubles final at Wimbledon in 1922, which they lost to American Elizabeth Ryan, partnering Suzanne Lenglen. This was just one of

⁸⁴ Local hockey notes, *Burnley News*, 22 November 1919, 5

⁸⁵ Eustace E White, Women at play, *Hampshire Advertiser*, 25 October 1919, 6

⁸⁶ *ibid*

26 grand slam doubles titles that Ryan would win during her illustrious career.⁸⁷

Supremely talented tennis players opting to winter in the south of France were only one reason for hockey's slow revival among the 'better class clubs', however. Large numbers of players – 'many of whom may be the former moving spirit of their old clubs' – had still to be demobilised after the war, it was reported, while the growing popularity of lacrosse was also having an impact.⁸⁸ A shortage of grounds, the cost of their upkeep, and high rail fares were also cited by the AEWHHA as 'retarding the progress of hockey'.⁸⁹ This was reflected in the first post-war AEWHHA club list, drawn up in 1920, which recorded just 150 affiliated clubs and schools.⁹⁰ The Northern Counties LHA had but 33 of these – 16 in Lancashire; 13 in Yorkshire, and 4 in Cheshire. By the end of the 1919/20 season, however, the LHL, Leeds and Sheffield leagues had 44 clubs between them.

Those gathered in Perivale for the AEWHHA's first post-war AGM could see the way the tide was turning and mathematics won the day. A proposal by Wilhelmina Baumann, that the formation of leagues within the governing body be allowed, was seconded by England captain Edith R. Clarke and carried unanimously. The meeting's approval was not without caveats, however. Mary Hankinson, giving voice to the governing body's continued disquiet over creeping professionalism, 'urged that under no consideration should a paid

⁸⁷ Kitty McKane Godfree/Elizabeth Ryan, International Tennis Hall of Fame – www.tennisfame.com/hall-of-famers/inductees; accessed 10 June 2018. The McKane sisters also won the All England badminton doubles title in 1921 and 1924, while Kitty won the singles title four times and Margaret once

⁸⁸ White, Women at play, *Hampshire Advertiser*, 25 October 1919, 6

⁸⁹ Eustace E White, Women at play, *Hampshire Advertiser*, 1 November 1919, 3

⁹⁰ Tomkins & Ward, *The century makers*, 37 & 31

player be allowed to become a member of the AEWHHA whether affiliated through a league club or otherwise'. On a more embracing note, Baumann – perhaps mindful of the increased number of working women who might be brought within the governing body's remit – asked that counties consider 'playing as many Saturday matches as possible'.⁹¹

Change was not about to happen overnight, however. A subcommittee – comprising Heron-Maxwell, Thompson, vice-president Catherine Gaskell; Hankinson and Vera Cox – was formed to consider the terms and conditions under which the AEWHHA would admit leagues. These did not go before the general meeting until April 1920, by which time the secretary of the LHL had written to the governing body to say it was 'desirous of becoming... affiliated'.⁹² There was, however, still some trepidation within the AEWHHA about the potential consequences of opening its door to leagues. Gaskell warned those present at the AGM in Richmond, Surrey, that 'great care would have to be exercised in dealing with these applications', after pointing out that a mixed league was being formed in Nottinghamshire.⁹³ Eight clubs had met at Nottingham YMCA at the start of the 1919/20 season to discuss setting up a mixed competition, as well as a county association, having been impressed by a similar, 'very successful' venture in Leicestershire. Four of those represented at the meeting – Crimson Ramblers, Mansfield, Mansfield TBSOS and Boots Athletic – ran 'ladies clubs', while the other four 'confine their attentions to mixed games'.⁹⁴ The AEWHHA was not in favour of mixed hockey and had long

⁹¹ AEWHHA AGM minutes, 26 April 1919, UoB Archive A/2/3

⁹² AEWHHA AGM minutes, 17 April 1920, UoB Archive A/2/3

⁹³ *ibid*

⁹⁴ Organising mixed hockey: ladies clubs may join in the new movement, *Nottingham Evening Post*, 15 October 1919, 3. The four mixed clubs in attendance were Mansfield, Notts Gregory, Player's Athletic and Notts Nomads

discouraged its members from taking part in matches. During the 1913/14 season, for example, the *Yorkshire Evening Post's* hockey columnist – after writing about the desire among some players to get mixed hockey officially recognised – received 'several letters from players prominent in the ladies' world of hockey'. One of these was the AEWHA secretary, Mary Simpson. Although supportive of a mixed association being formed if there was the demand – because 'a directly controlling and governing body would have a very beneficial influence on the game' – she went on to write:

I do not think it is in the best interests of hockey to encourage mixed play, beyond the boundaries of a few holiday matches. It seems to me that mixed games tend to lower the standard of play somewhat, and science often is entirely lost sight of in them. The men take upon themselves the brunt of the game, and the ladies do what they can when the men have, so to speak, finished with the ball.⁹⁵

As with cups and competitions, however, such disapproval by the AEWHA did not necessarily carry any weight at grassroots level, and Tyneside and the West Riding of Yorkshire were soon added to the areas of England boasting mixed leagues. Concerned that allowing women's leagues to affiliate might prompt calls from even less desirable competitions to be allowed to join, the AGM of 1920 unanimously agreed that 'all mixed hockey clubs' leagues be excluded from the AEWHA'. It went on to approve the application of the LHL

⁹⁵ Bully Off, Hockey in Yorkshire, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 28 January 1914, 3

– but, initially, only for one year.⁹⁶ Special bye-laws relating to leagues were then adopted, making it clear that:

- no league or combination of clubs would be recognised unless it represented at least three clubs (amended to seven at the 1922 AGM);
- a combined team of clubs in one league would rank as a county and be subject to the rules governing county teams;
- members of leagues would be ineligible for the [AEWHA-affiliated] county team, but eligible for territorial and international teams, and may nominate representatives to the selection committees in the same way as the counties;
- all league clubs would be entitled to send a representative to the AEWHA general meeting⁹⁷

Players with dual membership of an affiliated and a league club would also have to decide whether to represent their county or league, because they could not play for both in the same season.⁹⁸

Having agreed on the terms and conditions of membership, the AEWHA prepared to welcome the LHL into its ranks for the start of the 1920/21 season, albeit cautiously. Perhaps in an effort to smooth the transition, former England and North captain Florence Mack attended the LHL's annual gala a week shortly after the AGM, to present the divisional winners with their trophies. She complimented the league on its organisation, adding that there had been a

⁹⁶ AEWHA AGM minutes, 17 April 1920, UoB Archive A/2/3

⁹⁷ *ibid*

⁹⁸ *ibid*

great improvement in the play and the social side of the competition was excellent.⁹⁹

News that the AEWHHA was finally recognising leagues, was heralded as eminently sensible by the *Sheffield Independent's* hockey correspondent, who wrote:

Every enthusiast of the game welcomes the fusion of the All England Women's Hockey Association and the Ladies Hockey League. The latter body has shown by its splendid organisation and go-ahead methods to the older association that ladies' leagues run on well-governed lines (where the main idea is not a hunt for "pots", but a guarantee of matches arranged being duly carried out) are a great help to advancement in the game.¹⁰⁰

The *Star Green 'Un*, meanwhile, described the move as 'a step in the right direction, and one set of rules will prevail, which, in itself, will be an advantage'. It also reported that leagues wishing to align themselves with the AEWHHA would affiliate to a new body – 'The English Hockey League' – and have a representative on its ruling council. This, in turn, would affiliate to the AEWHHA and send a representative to that body.¹⁰¹ If this was ever the plan, it appears to have been abandoned by the 1921/22 season, when other leagues affiliated to the AEWHHA in their own right. Initially, though, only the LHL was admitted,

⁹⁹ Ladies hockey: Urmston win the flags, *Manchester Guardian*, 26 April 1920, 11. The LHL winners were Altrincham St Margaret's (First Division), Delph (Second Division), Sale (Third Division) and Urmston (Flag competition)

¹⁰⁰ Penalty Corner, *The Hockey Field: changed views on ladies' league games, Sheffield Independent*, 10 March 1920, 6

¹⁰¹ Sticks, Hockey notes, *Sheffield Star Green 'Un*, 13 March 1920, 6

and on 18 September 1920, it began its first season playing under the auspices of the AEWHHA. Founding teams Clarendon, Oldham, Saddleworth, Urmston Ladies and Altrincham St Margaret's were still represented in the top two divisions of what was now a four-tier competition – and, for Altrincham St Margaret's, it was a return to the fold. They had left the AEWHHA 10 years earlier to take up a place in the LHL and now came back as champions, having clinched the Division One title for a sixth time in the preceding April. In recognition of this achievement, they were allowed to keep the Ramsbottom Shield and a new trophy for the top division was presented by League chairman Mr A Jarvis.¹⁰² All other inaugural LHL sides had ceased playing (in the league, at least) after 1914, although several pre-war clubs did revive and re-join the competition after peace was declared, including Broughton, Delph and Middleton. The continued presence of such teams, however, did not prevent the *Hampshire Advertiser* from reporting that the AEWHHA's decision to recognise leagues had been made after it had considered 'the advisability of admitting working girls' clubs to the Association'. The article continued:

It was felt that every encouragement should be given to the thousands of munition workers and others who have been engaged in war work to take up hockey... Being a cheap game, and giving a maximum of exercise in a minimum of time, hockey is specially suited to manual workers.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 28 April 1920, 4

¹⁰³ Eustace E White, Women at Play, *Hampshire Advertiser*, 7 June 1919, 10

Author of the article Eustace E White – who would soon take over from Edith Thompson as editor of *The Hockey Field* – said Miss Mack had taken ‘an active part in fostering hockey among factory girls in Lancashire. ‘Nothing can stop the democratising of sport,’ he concluded, ‘and the voluntary action of the Women’s Hockey Association shows that they realise this.’¹⁰⁴ A post-war desire for greater democracy may well have been a driving force behind the AEWHHA’s decision to incorporate leagues, but – as already mentioned – so too was its reduced membership and dwindling funds. At the start of the 1920/21 season, therefore, the governing body launched another appeal to try to boost its affiliation figures. ‘In the interests of hockey it is the duty of all non-affiliated clubs – and there are many – to join the AEWHHA without delay,’ declared the ever amenable *Hampshire Advertiser*, before listing the benefits of affiliation, which came in ‘at a fee, per club, of something under a pound’. As well as reduced-price tickets for international and territorial matches, and a free copy of the rules and clubs list, members could expect to acquire ‘a certain standing which non-affiliated clubs cannot have’. ‘Women,’ the article concluded, ‘must combine and pull together in sport as well as in industrial, political and social matters.’¹⁰⁵

Whether this feminist appeal was an attempt to boost membership numbers sufficiently that the AEWHHA would not need to admit more leagues or extend the LHL’s affiliation beyond the initial year cannot be verified. If it was, it did not work – or the governing body had second thoughts – because seven more leagues were permitted to join for the 1921/22 season. Perhaps

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*

¹⁰⁵ Eustace E White, Women at play, *Hampshire Advertiser*, 30 October 1920, 6

surprisingly, given the AEWHAs distaste for mixed hockey, the Leicester and Leicestershire Ladies and Mixed Hockey Association was among these new affiliates. It is not clear whether any restrictions were placed on it in relation to playing the mixed game. The other leagues admitted at this time were Bradford, Leeds, Liverpool, Liverpool Union of Girls' Clubs, Sheffield and the London Women's Training Colleges. Together they added 94 clubs to the AEWHAs roster, while the LHL brought in another 56 teams.¹⁰⁶ Altrincham St Margaret's were no longer among them, however. Within six months of becoming champions again, they were reported to 'have fallen away badly and have little chance of retaining the title'.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, by the end of their first season back within the AEWHAs, the Cheshire side had been dethroned by Saddleworth and disappeared from the LHL's club list by the following season.¹⁰⁸

It was a surprisingly rapid demise for a team who had won their sixth title by scoring 122 goals and conceding only 29 in 21 games.¹⁰⁹ Whether this was caused by an exodus of players at the end of the 1919/20 season is unclear. It is possible, although difficult to verify, that some Altrincham St Margaret's members balked at the idea of coming back under the control of the AEWHAs, and so left – especially if they felt the governing body had been high-handed or unsympathetic towards the leagues and their players. The club itself, however, did not withdraw from the newly affiliated league, and at least three players – captain E. Butler, prolific goalscorer E. Espin and E. Street – were still turning out for Altrincham in the 1920/21 season, having been in the

¹⁰⁶ AEWHAs Affiliated Clubs Directory 1921/22, UoB Archive, A/5/14

¹⁰⁷ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 30 December 1920, 3

¹⁰⁸ AEWHAs Affiliated Clubs Directory 1921/22, UoB Archive A/5/14

¹⁰⁹ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 28 April 1920, 4

side that joined the inaugural LHL in 1910/11.¹¹⁰ Neither does the club's demise appear to have been brought about by an ageing team struggling to keep up with younger, fitter opponents. Butler was picked regularly for the League's representative side during the 1920/21 season and was chosen to take part in a North of England trial match. Street, Espin and another Altrincham player, P. Robinson, also earned league representative honours that season.¹¹¹ After Altrincham St Margaret's disappeared from the league scene, Butler and Robinson switched to play for newly promoted Delph in Division One, so they were far from ready to hang up their sticks at this point.

As the LHL was bidding farewell to its most successful team, however, the AEWHHA was heralding the 'splendid recovery made by the Association since the war'. From 103 affiliated clubs in October 1919, president Heron-Maxwell informed the 1922 AGM, there were now 416, with an additional 150 belonging to affiliated leagues. 'The aim of the AEWHHA was to embrace all women hockey players,' she added, before concluding that:

The continued success of the Association lies in the hands of its members, and by success I do not mean merely a large increase of clubs – that goes without saying – but an increase in that spirit of comradeship and friendly cooperation which we learn from the game itself, and which gives it its real value.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Ladies Hockey League, *Manchester Guardian*, 19 October 1920, 5

¹¹¹ Ladies Hockey, *Manchester Guardian*, 22 January 1921, 11

¹¹² AEWHHA AGM Minutes, 13 May 1922, UoB Archive A/2/3

Comradeship and friendly cooperation were all well and good, but some members also wanted an increase in democracy within the AEWHHA. To this end, Susan Smee, a former captain of Chiswick LHC and president of the Southern and Middlesex associations, stood against Heron-Maxwell in a ballot for the presidency. She had been nominated by V Fraser who 'pleaded the desirability for occasional changes in the officers, and for the opportunity of offering the highest honour in the Association to members who had done good work for hockey in the past. It was, Fraser said, from no feeling of disloyalty to the present constitution that she put forward another nomination, which was seconded by up-and-coming young administrator – and future AEWHHA president – Hilda Light.¹¹³

Heron-Maxwell's re-election was proposed by Edith Thompson and seconded by Miss Thompson-Smith. The AEWHHA Council wanted to ensure continuity in their policy, said Thompson, who credited Heron-Maxwell with keeping the association alive during the war years. 'Hockey had made a wonderful recovery, but it was early days to make drastic changes in the control of the association' she added.¹¹⁴ The membership opted to maintain the status quo, and Heron-Maxwell won the ballot by 138 votes to 27.¹¹⁵ She stepped down as president the following year, however, and Thompson (78 votes) was chosen to be her successor after a three-way election with Catharine Gaskell (22) and Mary Simpson (13). On taking up her new role, Thompson proposed a vote of thanks to Heron-Maxwell, saying: 'It was entirely due to her energy and initiative that hockey now held the position of premier

¹¹³ *ibid*

¹¹⁴ *ibid*

¹¹⁵ *ibid*

winter game for women and that the association was representative of all classes of the community. The AEWHHA held a very important position and exercised a worldwide influence.¹¹⁶ It was a desire to build on this global influence that meant Frances Heron-Maxwell was not quite done with hockey yet.

New directions

The AEWHHA had wasted little time in resuming its international activities after World War One and, in the few seasons up to Heron-Maxwell's resignation as president, it sent touring teams to the USA (1921) and Denmark (1922), and hosted a side from France (1923). In March 1924, after England had thrashed the USA 17-1 in south London, Heron-Maxwell chaired a discussion about setting up an international hockey federation. Only two months earlier, the male-led Fédération Internationale de Hockey (FIH) had been founded, to which some continental European women's teams were already affiliated – largely by default, as they were members of unified national governing bodies. The five associations at Heron-Maxwell's meeting, however, do not appear to have considered affiliating to this fledgling body, which was conceived by Frenchman Paul Léautey, primarily to get men's hockey reinstated into the Olympic Games. It was an enterprise that the men's associations of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland also had no interest in pursuing, and they declined to join the FIH – possibly because of a growing antipathy towards the Olympic movement within the British Isles.

¹¹⁶ AEWHHA AGM Minutes, 5 May 1923, UoB Archive A/2/3

After World War One, British athletes and administrators began questioning their involvement in the Games, which had frequently become embroiled in controversy because of varying interpretations of amateurism. In London in 1908, for instance, the presence of a 'professional' in the marathon and the perceived partiality of the British judges and referees had, among other incidents, stoked bitter rivalry between the host nation and the USA.¹¹⁷ Reports of unsporting behaviour at Antwerp 1920, meanwhile – including Belgian fans booing *God Save The King* before the water polo final and Czech footballers walking off the pitch in protest at decisions by a British referee – had the *Daily Express* declaring: 'The amateur status of the competitors has been as questionable as ever ... there has been no vestige of the true spirit of sport in the proceedings'.¹¹⁸ Another reason for the British men's refusal to sign up to the FIH was later posited by Patrick Rowley, former editor-in-chief of *World Hockey*. He believed that the Home Nations – having set up the International Rules Board in 1900, to write and modify the rules of the game – 'feared that the European countries might usurp their authority'.¹¹⁹ It was a fear probably shared by the AEWHF – but with the added dimension that the usurping would be done by men. With nearly 30 years of successful self-governance behind them, England's hockey women had no desire to cede any control over their affairs, be they national or international.

Heron-Maxwell's idea for a federation of women's hockey associations fitted with the post-war spirit of international cooperation that, in 1920, had

¹¹⁷ George R Matthews, The controversial Olympic Games of 1908 as viewed by the *New York Times* and the *Times* of London, in *Journal of Sport History* 7:2, Summer 1980

¹¹⁸ Llewellyn, Olympic Games are an international farce, 766

¹¹⁹ FIH, Hockey and Olympism, LA84 Foundation Library, 812 – digital.la84.org/digital/collection/p17103coll1/id/32064/rec/1: accessed: 29 March 2019

brought about the formation of the League of Nations. After the horrors of the Great War, people hoped the creation of transnational organisations could foster goodwill and understanding between countries, and act as platforms for resolving disputes, to prevent such bloodshed ever happening again. One such organisation was the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), which would become a sort of a blueprint for the IFWHA. It came into being after English academics Dr Caroline Spurgeon and Rose Sidgwick went on a British universities mission to the US and Canada in the final year of World War One. There, Spurgeon voiced the idea to her American hosts that: 'We should have an international association of university women, so we shall have done what we can to prevent another such catastrophe.'¹²⁰ The aim of the organisation, she said, would be 'to promote understanding and friendship between university women of the world, and thereby to further their interests and develop between their countries sympathy and mutual helpfulness'.¹²¹ After an initial meeting at Spurgeon's place of work – Bedford College – a constitution was drawn up at her Surrey home and then adopted at the federation's first conference, also at Bedford College, in July 1920.

Former AEWHA president Faithfull was active within the IFUW and – given the role university colleges played in establishing hockey as the pre-eminent winter game for women in England – other players and administrators would undoubtedly have featured among its membership.¹²² Spurgeon, who

¹²⁰ Dame Dorothy Winstone, 'Who was Virginia Gildersleeve?', International Federation of University Women – www.ifuw.org/posts/archive-pages/who-was-virginia-gildersleeve/: accessed 10 April 2013. Rose Sidgwick was the niece of Eleanor Sidgwick, principal of Newnham College, Cambridge, who turned down the chance to be the first president of the AEWHA

¹²¹ *ibid*

¹²² Gillian Avery, Lilian Mary Faithfull (1865-1952), headmistress, *ODNB*, 23 September 2004 – www.oxforddnb.com: accessed 6 March 2013.

was the first woman to occupy a university chair in Britain, certainly had links to the AEWH. She studied at King's College London in the late 1890s, when Faithfull was its vice-principal, and played for the college hockey team – her usefulness as a full-back 'only equalled by the splendid work which she performs in the post of honorary secretary to the club'.¹²³ In this capacity, she undoubtedly had contact with the AEWH, but she later also shared her home with former England captain Lilian Clapham.¹²⁴ Spurgeon, therefore, was an accessible and obvious adviser to Heron-Maxwell when, in 1924, she sought to set up an international federation for hockey. The initial meeting was attended by representatives from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the USA, but – perhaps for logistical reasons – the committee appointed to draft the constitution consisted only of Englishwomen: Heron-Maxwell, Thompson, Gaskell, Baumann and Spurgeon.¹²⁵

There are certainly echoes of the IFUW in the hockey federation, not least in its British-American roots and its constitutional aim to 'further the best interests of the game among women of all nations ... and to promote friendly intercourse among players'.¹²⁶ The architects of the IFWHA, like those of the IFUW, regarded their organisation as an agent for peace, and Thompson 'idealistically spoke of sport as the best way "to foster the Locarno spirit"'.¹²⁷ It was said of Heron-Maxwell, meanwhile, that she 'appreciated the value of contacts made on the hockey field and visualised the contribution that women might make to the development of friendship and understanding among

¹²³ Sportswoman's page, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 13 January 1900, 762

¹²⁴ Brighton Ourstory Newsletter, Like Dawn in Paradise, Issue 19, Summer 2006 – brightonourstory.co.uk/newsletters/summer06/paradise.htm: accessed 28 January 2013

¹²⁵ AEWH AGM minutes, 3 May 1924, UoB Archive A/2/4.

¹²⁶ AEWH AGM minutes, 16 May 1925, UoB Archive A/2/4

¹²⁷ Tomkins & Ward, *The century makers*, 76

nations through... an international organisation which would provide a periodic meeting place and a platform for exchange of ideas'.¹²⁸ The federation would also have the more prosaic aims of working for uniformity of hockey's rules and arranging international matches.

The IFWHA became a reality in 1927 and its first conference was scheduled for Geneva in July 1930. 'That rather suggests League of Nations or something of that sort,' the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* obligingly pointed out of the venue, before adding: 'Hockey women at the moment are out for big, progressive, productive movements – an Empire tournament [in South Africa] and an international federation are both going strong – all in the same year.'¹²⁹ As work to establish the IFWHA and organise its first conference gathered pace, the AEWHHA – in the vanguard of the movement – seems to have become increasingly concerned, once again, about leagues within England's domestic game.

A parting of the ways

Having admitted the LHL for membership at the start of the 1920/21 season, the AEWHHA contented itself with tweaking the rules relating to leagues – in particular, the ones concerned with fees and representation on councils and selection committees. Undoubtedly, its hope was still that members of such competitions, through their affiliation and closer association with the governing body, would quickly be persuaded of the virtues of not playing for points or prizes. By the mid-1920s, however, the futility of this hope was becoming

¹²⁸ Women's hockey: international hockey, *Northampton Mercury*, 10 March 1939, 17

¹²⁹ Atalanta, The out-of-door woman, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 16 November 1929, 42

obvious, so a special sub-committee was appointed to consult on and debate revisions to the AEWHHA's bye-laws about leagues. The aim, it would appear, was to legislate and cajole them into submission.

After the sub-committee reported back to the Council, recommendations were put before the 1926 AGM. Here, delegates agreed that leagues affiliated to the AEWHHA before May 1926 could continue playing for cups and trophies – 'if they wished to do so' – but that future affiliates would be barred from doing the same thing.¹³⁰ This amendment was not passed unanimously, but rather 'nem com' – that is, with no-one contradicting – but a subclause that sought to change league members' qualification for territorial and international honours caused more of a stir. League representative sides, the amendment stated, would still have the status of a county, but the players would only be eligible for regional or national selection if their individual clubs paid the full affiliation fee to the relevant Territory. The AGM minutes record that there was some discussion about this, 'as league representatives held that they would be losing their rights'.¹³¹ Another amendment was put forward 'remedying the position for leagues already in the Association', but this was lost by 22 votes to 24 and the original proposal was passed, seven members – presumably from the leagues – voting against it.¹³²

Perhaps the most intriguing rule change that came under consideration at this meeting, however, concerned the role of men in women's hockey – league or otherwise. As mentioned in Chapter One, it is unclear whether the much-vaunted ban on men holding executive office within the AEWHHA was an

¹³⁰ AEWHHA AGM minutes, 12 June 1926, UoB Archive A/2/4

¹³¹ *ibid*

¹³² *ibid*

actual proposal – voted for by the founders of the governing body after the HA had refused their affiliation in 1895 – or an unwritten aspiration that stuck faster with each passing year of self-governance. It is also unclear whether the ban was intended to extend only to the AEWHAs's executive body or to those of all the clubs and associations affiliated to it – in which case, it had not been a very strictly imposed condition. Colonel William Leir, of Bath, for instance, had been the long-term secretary of the Western Counties LHA before his death in 1916 and was said to be 'in the unique position of being the only man official of the AEWHAs'. 'Even those who privately disapprove of a man having any control over ladies' hockey cannot help envying the West the possession of such an exceptionally capable and enterprising secretary,' reported the *Pall Mall Gazette*.¹³³ Leir, however, was not so unique; the AEWHAs's 1913/14 clubs lists reveals at least four male honorary secretaries among the affiliated clubs, including H V Crockford, of Catford LHC in Kent – county association of the then AEWHAs president Frances Heron-Maxwell. By 1926/27, there were more than 30 men performing the role for various clubs across England, while two of the five affiliated leagues had male honorary secretaries – Liverpool Ladies (John Lishman) and Stockport & District (H Bruckshaw). An entry in the minutes from the 1926 AGM, however, suggests that the governing body had reached a point where it wanted the ban on male officials to be unequivocal. It reads:

Proposed by the Council.

¹³³ Ladies hockey: the Western Counties tournament, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 8 January 1913, 15

Rule 1, Page 5 Line 4. After 'of,' add 'women,' and add the following note: ('This shall not debar men from holding non-executive offices as president and vice-president.')¹³⁴

Again, the amendment was passed *nem con*. In practical terms, it meant all affiliated clubs and associations with male secretaries would be obliged to find women to replace them, and the AGM agreed that two years was 'a reasonable' period of time to affect this change.¹³⁵

Why the AEWHA decided to tighten its ruling on men at this time is unclear, but the governing body's lead role in the formation of the IFWHA could be one reason. Article 3 of the recently adopted constitution of the international federation stated that membership was 'open to any national women's hockey association having a minimum of 10 clubs, provided that such has been approved by the Council. Only one association in each nation to be approved'.¹³⁶ This was taken to mean that only nations whose associations were run solely by women were eligible, 'thus ruling out several continental countries, whose sport is organised and trained by men, usually to the detriment of the game'.¹³⁷ By 1926, then, the AEWHA was championing the formation of a female-led, transnational organisation, that would be distinct and separate from the already established, male-led FIH – a proposition that might be rendered weaker by the presence of men within its own ranks. The English association was also seeking to import into the IFWHA amateur ideals – such as not playing for championships or trophies – to which not all national

¹³⁴ AEWHA AGM minutes, 12 June 1926, UoB Archive A/2/4, 68

¹³⁵ *ibid*, 70. *Nem con* is an abbreviation of *nemine contradicente*, meaning without dissent

¹³⁶ AEWHA AGM minutes, 16 May 1925, UoB Archive A/2/4

¹³⁷ *Argus*, Federation conference to be held in Britain, *Sunderland Daily Echo*, 4 March 1939, 9

governing bodies would have attached the same significance. Again, the presence of leagues within its membership might have weakened the AEWH's argument for pursuing such an aim – hence its decision to curtail 'pot hunting' among its new affiliates. Some of the governing body's more high-profile officers were also beginning to re-voice their opposition to competitions. Vice-president Catharine Gaskell, who would become the IFWHA's first president in 1927, stated:

The rule that forbids the playing for cups and trophies is ... one of the main foundations upon which our Association has built up the position it holds in the athletic world today ... We shall be wise to keep out playing for trophies if we mean to preserve in its full strength that amateur spirit that is such an important asset to our nation.¹³⁸

The Hockey Field, too, was giving column inches again to the gnarly debate about what constitutes an amateur. A professional coach advertising for appointments – and, in doing so, setting out her hockey achievements – was subjected to a poetical rebuke by an anonymous author, who 'disconsolately pondered on the prospects of the game...':

For I looked into the future, thirty years or so ahead;
Saw it gone the way of soccer, as a game completely dead.
Heard the thousands of spectators who had never held a stick
Betting on a cup-tie final, cheering til they made me sick.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Tomkins & Ward, *The century makers*, 95

¹³⁹ To a professional coach whose advertisement sets forth her hockey achievements, *The Hockey Field*, 7 January 1928, 9

The coach's argument that she truly loved the game held no water with the poet, who believed players who made their living in other ways were being put at a disadvantage:

From the team you oust that other; she's a job she cannot shirk;

Hockey is *her* recreation; you have made it *your* life's work.

'Both are amateurs,' you tell me. Are you? Are you quite the same?

Can't you, won't you, try to see it just because you love the game?¹⁴⁰

Major Arthur Uvedale Udal – a minor counties and army cricketer, who also penned books on hockey – praised the poet for being 'brave enough to voice what other people have so far only dared to *think*', but, he asked, 'where is one to draw the line... Unless someone is clever enough to give a definition of an amateur that will cover all branches of sport, it seems unwise to stir up mud.'¹⁴¹ The AEWHHA may have thought it had been clever enough with its definition – 'An amateur is one who does not play for money' – but, as Udal pointed out, 'others maintain that the strict amateur receives no expenses or any kind of pecuniary advantage for playing, which means that only people of independent private means can be amateurs. If that is so, then over ninety per cent of club members nowadays are *not* amateurs; therefore they must be professionals.'¹⁴²

With such sentiments emanating from the top of the AEWHHA and its official magazine – and with new bye-laws aimed at sidelining their playing

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.* Author's emphasis

¹⁴¹ A U Udal, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 14 January 1928, 11

¹⁴² *ibid*

philosophy, as well as their executive officers – it is perhaps not surprising that some leagues decided the governing body was not a natural fit for them. First to resign their affiliation, at the end of the 1926/27 season, were the 44 members of Liverpool Ladies League, to be followed in 1929 by one league of 34 clubs and, in 1931, by another – probably Stockport & District – numbering 29. Interestingly, the LHL remained within the AEWHHA, and was later to be renamed the North of England League.

Dependence and independence in the inter-war period

The AEWHHA entered the war years hoping that, by adopting a more friendly attitude towards the LHL, it might persuade league players to see the error of their ways and give up competing for points and prizes. It re-emerged in peacetime – after four years of conflict, during which hockey players contributed greatly to the war effort and mixed more freely with women of all classes and backgrounds – needing leagues to survive. The governing body's insistence that its affiliates play only friendly matches meant there was always the potential for games to fall by the wayside when other, more pressing, matters claimed players' time and attention. As a result, the AEWHHA was a weakened organisation by 1919, both in terms of membership and money. By contrast, the LHL – with its centralised organisation and regular fixture lists – maintained a strong presence throughout the war years and emerged in a relatively healthy position. Other leagues were also created between 1914 and 1918, offering much-needed recreation for women involved in gruelling war work.

Faced with the challenge of building up hockey again in post-war England, the AEWHHA Council – while still fundamentally opposed to leagues and trophies – recognised the need to compromise. In the interests of self-preservation, it tentatively opened its door to leagues and, for a few years, the organisations maintained an uneasy alliance. Reviving the domestic game was only one of the AEWHHA's objectives, however. Taking its inspiration from the peace movement that developed after World War One, Frances Heron-Maxwell and leading members of the executive sought to establish an international hockey federation to promote understanding and friendship between nations. As the driving force behind what it envisioned being a women-led, strictly amateur organisation, the AEWHHA – having regained its strength – began once again to regard leagues as problematic. Rather than wait and hope that its edifying influence would bring about the natural demise of such competitions, the governing body changed its rules to signal that 'pot hunters' and male officials were now less welcome within its walls.

The admission of leagues to its ranks had helped the AEWHHA boost its post-war membership figures, but the governing body had never really reconciled itself to affiliates playing for trophies or men having a say in the running of women's hockey. Now, as it turned its attention beyond England and towards a global federation of players, the AEWHHA felt the need to re-assert its amateur and feminist credentials. In doing so, it alienated a sizeable proportion of its league affiliates, who decided their future lay outside of the governing body. Over the next decade, these leagues would construct an alternative organisation for women's hockey in England – an organisation so effective that the AEWHHA would once again be forced to compromise on its

two key principles: not playing for trophies and having men in positions of influence.

Chapter 4: Internationalism, the formation of the English Ladies Hockey Leagues Association, and the search for consensus

'We are continually being asked the question "What are the benefits of affiliation to the AEWHHA?"' So began a 1928 article in *The Hockey Field*, which answered by listing 15 for 'those of our readers whose clubs and schools are not affiliated'. This list ran from being recognised as 'playing the game on the right lines', through representation at AGMs, to help with securing the services of umpires. More than these practical considerations, however, were the intangible benefits:

Firstly, that splendid esprit de corps which prevails among all the affiliated clubs; and secondly, the spirit of playing the game for the game's sake in its fairest and cleanest form...one only has to be present at one of the county tournaments or gatherings to realise that, amid all the excitement and hubbub, the AEWHHA stands for something very real to all its members.¹

In a country facing rising unemployment and higher living costs as a result of post-war global economic and trading conditions, 'splendid esprit de corps' and being seen to play the game 'on the right lines' were not incentive enough for many clubs and organisations to pay the AEWHHA's annual subscription. Beyond financial considerations, however, the governing body's increasingly internationalist outlook during the 1920s, and its officers' broadening range of

¹ Affiliation to the All England Women's Hockey Association, *The Hockey Field*, 11 February 1928, 4

interests, may have made it seem remote from the playing experience of those who happily confined their interest in hockey to weekly club games.

Having sent a team to Australia and New Zealand before the war, it had perhaps always been the AEWHHA's intention to establish international connections beyond the Home Nations. The wartime experiences of its members, however, appear to have added urgency to this ambition. A decade of frenetic overseas activity followed as hockey sought to contribute to the general post-war desire to build bridges between nations and foster greater understanding. There were early forays to the USA and Denmark before Frances Heron-Maxwell stepped down as president, to be replaced by Edith Thompson, erstwhile editor of *The Hockey Field* and a former vice-president under Lilian Faithfull. The scope and frequency of tours increased after Heron-Maxwell set in motion plans for an international hockey federation in 1924, the AEWHHA taking every opportunity to dispatch teams around the world – many of them led by Thompson. In addition to fulfilling annual fixtures against Ireland, Scotland and Wales, English sides were sent to South Africa (1925); Germany, Holland and Belgium (1926); Australia (1927); the USA (1928); and Denmark and Germany (1929). Teams from France, the USA and South Africa were also hosted by the AEWHHA in 1923, 1924 and 1927 respectively.²

As well as accompanying AEWHHA teams overseas, Thompson travelled frequently in connection with her work for the Society for the Oversea Settlement of British Women. This had been set up after World War One because the government feared the reduced number of men would leave too many women single and that they would become a burden on the state. It was

² Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 55

the Society's job to find these 'surplus women' employment overseas, and Thompson was in charge of tours to Canada.³ The AEWHHA president also found time to act as the representative for women's hockey within the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA). Established in July 1925, after a mass meeting of interested parties in the Royal Albert Hall, the association's aim was to address the country's lack of recreational facilities. 'Our young people are continually being told to play and not look on,' said the NPFA's instigators. 'There is real irony in this when we think of the thousands and tens of thousands who have no grounds to play on.' More than 200 hockey women attended its initial meeting, after which Thompson was drafted on to the NPFA's provisional committee, before taking a seat on its executive.⁴

A year later, the president and several other members of the AEWHHA – including Mary Hankinson and Marjorie Pollard – began involving themselves in the formation of the All England Netball Association (AENA). Thompson chaired its inaugural meeting in 1926, while former England hockey international Edith R Clarke became the AENA's first president.⁵ Later that same year, another group of AEWHHA members formed the Women's Cricket Association (WCA) after enjoying a week of friendly matches in Colwall, Herefordshire. Frances Heron-Maxwell became the WCA's first chairman, AEWHHA treasurer Vera Cox was appointed its honorary secretary and the committee included Edith R Clarke, Marjorie Pollard and Edith Thompson,

³ Bonnie White, *The Society for the Oversea Settlement of British Women 1919-1964* (Springer Nature Switzerland, Cham, 2019), 1 & 95

⁴ AEWHHA AGM minutes, 12 June 1926, UoB Archive A/2/4; Nancy Astor et al, Correspondence: more playing fields for the people, *Western Mail*, 4 April 1925, 11

⁵ Dr Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, The origins and formation of England netball, presentation given to Manchester Metropolitan University SPleish Colloquium 2017 – www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/team-sports/the-origins-and-formation-of-england-netball/: accessed 6 April 2019

among others. Their aim was to 'encourage the formation of cricket clubs and, from these... to build up county teams', and they achieved remarkable results. Between 1927 and 1938, the WCA increased its membership from 46 clubs to 210.⁶

Perhaps because of her growing number of commitments, Thompson stepped down as AEWHHA president in 1929, to be replaced by Catharine Gaskell, who – two years earlier – had been made inaugural president of the IFWHA. Together with AEWHHA secretary Winifred Baumann – who had assumed the same role for the international federation – Gaskell was charged with organising the first IFWHA conference in Geneva in 1930. Whether the many overseas trips made by AEWHHA teams in the 1920s were part of a concerted effort to promote and gather support for the IFWHA is not clear. Nevertheless, all the European sides visited or hosted by the English over the preceding decade, plus the USA and the Home Nations, sent representatives to Switzerland. The host nation was represented too and, despite some correspondents declaring that 'hockey in July seems a little out of place somehow – and hockey in Geneva seems positively impossible', two evening matches were scheduled. The first, between teams raised from the British Isles, was to be 'in the nature of a demonstration game', while the second would feature players from the various attending nations.⁷ Such programming was in keeping with the AEWHHA's perception of itself as the guardian of the game, whose mission it was to spread the gospel of hockey around the globe.

⁶ Judy Threlfall-Sykes, *A History of English Women's Cricket 1880-1939*, 102, PhD thesis, De Montfort University, October 2015 – www.dora.dmu.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2086/12262/Thesis.pdf?sequence=1: accessed 6 April 2019; The Cricket Association, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 25 December 1926, 913

⁷ All sorts of sport, *Nottingham Evening Post*, 27 June 1930, 14

English players – and to a far lesser extent those from the other constituent parts of the British Isles – had much to teach the rest of the world about technique and tactics, the governing body believed. It was this kind of thinking that led the AEWH to produce an innovative instructional film in 1928, a project that again attracted the ‘unfettered enthusiasm and determination’ of Thompson, Cox and Baumann. The film showed ‘snatches of international games and “close-ups” of famous players in action’, and featured ‘a most useful “slow motion” series, which demonstrates certain strokes to perfection’. By the end of the decade, it had been shown to more than 35,000 players – including many in Liverpool ‘under the aegis of the Ladies’ Hockey League’, when it was accompanied by the ‘expert lecturing of Miss Baumann’. Copies of the film were later distributed as far afield as Canada, Australia, South Africa, Holland, Denmark and Germany.⁸ A demonstration game by British players in Geneva would serve a similar purpose, giving the other nations an opportunity to learn before trying to put into practice what they had witnessed.

The prospect of a Home Nations display team caused some excitement in the media, with regular commentator on the sport ‘Atalanta’ declaring it a first: ‘Never before has there been a British side, a team in which players from all the countries in the United Kingdom have been combined.’ The second, multi-nation match in Geneva also augured well for the future of the sport, she added:

It is really rather remarkable that the rules for the game are such that
a match of this kind can take place. This keeping a uniformity of the

⁸ G N Osborne, Hockey for summer, *Liverpool Echo*, 29 March 1930, 6; Pollard, *Fifty years of women’s hockey*, 39-40

rules is one of the main planks in the Federation's programme, and it will do much to make matters smooth for teams when they go abroad.⁹

Catherine Gaskell and the USA's Helen Krumbhaar were the umpires charged with ensuring uniform adherence to these rules, while former England player Helen Armfield put together the teams for the demonstration match. She played on the 'Green' side, alongside nine other English players and Ireland captain Mrs Charters. Their opponents, the 'Stone' team, were more representative of the British Isles, with Wales captain Muriel Orsman lining up alongside two Scots, an Irishwoman and seven English players. No representatives on either side, however, were from the north-west of England, three Durham players forming the entire contingent from the AEWHAs North territory. The women who played in Geneva were not necessarily the best exponents of hockey in the country; the two teams were selected from among delegates to the conference and 53 players, of county standard or above, who had applied to take part.¹⁰ Like the 15 women representing the AEWHAs at the first Empire Tournament in South Africa that same summer – for which £5,000 had been raised to fulfil the itinerary – they were the ones who could afford the time and money to travel overseas.¹¹ Even within AEWHAs teams supposedly chosen on merit, the North's representation was fairly limited. Between 1920 and 1929, only four players from the territory were selected to play for England XIs – Mabel Bryant (seven times) and M Hunt (1924), both of Liverpool

⁹ Atalanta, The out-of-door woman, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 7 December 1929, 698-700

¹⁰ All sorts of sport, *Nottingham Evening Post*, 27 June 1930, 14

¹¹ Jason, Hockey in South Africa, *Lincolnshire Echo*, 20 September 1930, 3

Physical Training College; and M Hollowell (1922) and E Goldsworth (1929), of Southport.¹² In reality, therefore, league players had little prospect of reaching the pinnacle of their sport even before the 1926 AGM tightened the rules on their eligibility for international selection.

With their path to representative honours virtually closed, and the AEWHAs focus seemingly everywhere but on domestic hockey, it is perhaps unsurprising that league players failed to see its relevance to them. As the governing body looked to export its amateur, female-centric philosophy beyond England's shores via the IFWHA, it appeared to have less and less to offer those who simply wanted regular games and the chance to win silverware. Beyond receiving a free copy of the rules and a clubs list, it must have seemed to such clubs that their subscriptions were simply supporting a hierarchical, unmeritocratic structure in which they could never truly belong or participate. Since the mid-1920s, the AEWHAs – through rule changes and rhetoric – had also been reasserting its belief in 'play for play's sake', restating its opposition to trophies and to men holding executive office within women's hockey. Having regained its numerical strength and taken the lead role in creating a new, international community of players, the AEWHAs perhaps considered itself to be in a better position to weather any loss of affiliates that its stricter stance might prompt. Council members, no doubt, were sincere in their desire to include all players within the Association – having worked and socialised with women from a variety of backgrounds during World War One – but the governing body no longer felt the need to accommodate leagues as it had

¹² Peggy Lodge, Hockey, in Noel, *Sportswoman's manual*, 140-141

done in 1919, when the main aim was to rebuild the sport and regain its premier position within it.

Whatever hopes the league associations might have had for their post-war alliance with the AEWHHA dissipated rapidly in the final years of the decade and – as outlined in Chapter 3 – several broke away from it again. Within five years of the first league resigning its affiliation, an alternative organisation had been set up to cater specifically for those women who played for points and prizes. Rarely mentioned in the sparse historical work on the sport to date – save for this author's 2017 article 'Thus far and no farther: the rise of women's hockey leagues in England from 1910 to 1939' – the English Ladies Hockey Leagues' Association (ELHLA) grew to some influence within a very short space of time.¹³ It established a calendar of cup competitions and international fixtures, and – by the outbreak of World War Two – had worried the AEWHHA sufficiently for the older governing body to reconsider an accommodation with the 'pot-hunters'. This chapter will look at the genesis of the ELHLA, its evolution throughout the 1930s, and its influence on the AEWHHA's attitude towards competitions and male administrators in women's sport.

The advent of Hilda Light

Whether she only ever intended her tenure at the top of the AEWHHA to be temporary, Catherine Gaskell described her presidency as 'merely an interlude' – and in 1931, after two seasons in charge, she gave way to Hilda Light.¹⁴ Described as 'a visionary, not a reactionary', Light had been tipped as

¹³ Halpin, 'Thus far and no farther', 146-163

¹⁴ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 33

a future president seven years earlier. Her knowledge of the game and its rules was said to be 'crystal clear', while 'her belief in the fundamental principles on which the AEWHHA had been established was profound'. It was later suggested, however, that she was more interested in the governing body's international development than in its internal growth' – although one of her first actions as president was to address the reasons behind the AEWHHA's steady loss of league affiliates since 1927.¹⁵

At the 1931 AGM, she admitted that questions relating to league hockey had been 'of absorbing interest to the Council during the year' and that 'a great deal of time and thought [had] been given to the subject'.¹⁶ This would have been typical of any administration headed by Light, who – from childhood – had applied herself conscientiously and diligently to achieve success. Although intelligent and eager to learn, she had not been considered academic at school because examinations caused her 'severe nervous strain'. Success at games did not come easily either and, despite rising through the hockey ranks to become England captain in 1924, Light had needed to work hard to achieve the standard required. She played her club hockey for Pinner, alongside her mother, Catherine, and sister, Elsie, while her brother, Donald – also an England international – would often umpire for the team. After matches, the players would go to the Lights' home for tea. 'Hockey in the Light household was not only an interest, it was an expression of happiness and a means of sensible entertainment and communication.' Despite not being a naturally gifted athlete, Hilda had taken 'the necessary trouble to play games

¹⁵ Marjorie Pollard (ed), *Hilda M Light: her life and times* (AEWHHA, London 1972), 32-33

¹⁶ AEWHHA AGM minutes, 9 May 1931, UoB Archive A/2/5, 10

well', which – according to her friends and team-mates – showed that 'she somehow realised their potential value and possibilities'.¹⁷ Having assumed the highest office in English women's hockey, Light was now having to work out why so many clubs and players saw no value in remaining within the AEWHHA.

The three main reasons such organisations were no longer willing to affiliate, she concluded, were: 'Our policy regarding the playing for cups; our insistence upon the organisation within the AEWHHA of the game for women by women; [and] our apparent apathy and lack of interest in their affairs.'¹⁸ The third problem, Light suggested, was a consequence of the first two: 'Not unnaturally, if there is no possibility of affiliation there is not much likelihood of active interest' she said, before quickly adding, 'we can honestly assure any hockey club or organisation of our interest, whether affiliated or not.' However, the president declared that the other obstacles to league affiliation 'involve two of the strongest principles of our association, which we feel have in no small measure ensured the development and success of the association, and have preserved the purely amateur spirit of the game upon which we set the greatest possible importance'.¹⁹ Light acknowledged that 'the organisation of leagues in certain localities is admirable and secures for the girls the playing of a game which without such organisation would be impossible' – but, she added, the AEWHHA Council had:

¹⁷ Pollard, *Hilda M Light*, 16-17

¹⁸ AEWHHA AGM minutes, 9 May 1931, UoB Archive A/2/5, 10

¹⁹ *ibid*

not seen or heard anything which has caused us to vary our opinion that they [cups and trophies] are not in the best interests of the game... we maintain that they tend to give the result an undue importance and to gain the victory has a tendency to become a matter of such moment that any steps begin to seem justified to secure it.²⁰

Even so, the loss of so many league affiliates was causing the Council to fret about the AEWHAs position as a national organisation. Whether it feared the emergence of a rival organisation at this stage – more than a year before the first meeting of the ELHLA – is unclear, but it was increasingly aware of the need to justify itself as a governing body for the whole of England. 'We should not be acting fairly to the pioneer women who founded our association... if by any fault of ours or lack of consideration we were to debar many thousands of women and girls from membership if they desire to affiliate,' said Light, who added:

We feel there should be room in the AEWHAs for every type of hockey to flourish. It is the function of the association to control the game for women and it is for us to adapt our organisation as far as is reasonably possible to meet the demands of changing conditions.²¹

To this end, the Council – after taking 'immense pains' to understand league organisation – recommended that the AGM vote to permit playing for cups by

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ *ibid*

leagues in 'certain controlled circumstances'. Regardless of when they affiliated, it was agreed that leagues could continue playing for the trophies they had, but they could not accept new ones. They were also not allowed to take part in inter-league cup matches, had to leave dates open in the season for 'friendly' matches, and could not stop clubs from playing teams outside their own league. 'Nothing we can do at the moment will stop their [trophies] use,' said Light, 'but as a National Association I feel we should be ready to interest ourselves in and help hockey of every type'.²²

This conditional, second embrace of the 'pot hunters' came with the same AEWHHA aspiration as had the first, 10 years earlier: 'If eventually our friends in the leagues, on closer cooperation with us, come to feel our outlook is sound and worthy of emulation so much the better,' Light told the AGM.²³ Such enduring optimism overlooked the fact that closer cooperation with the AEWHHA after World War One had resulted not in the leagues renouncing their ways, but in them renouncing their memberships. Still, the governing body hoped the latest iteration of its bye-laws would be enough to convince leagues that they were welcome within the AEWHHA – so its supporters were perplexed when the ELHLA emerged the following year. 'There does not seem to be any need for another association,' wrote *The Times*' hockey correspondent, who – if not connected to the AEWHHA – was certainly sympathetic to it. 'The point of difference again is over playing for trophies,' they continued:

The [AEWHHA], though not approving of this, have allowed the leagues within their borders to do so for many years. The North of

²² *ibid*, 11

²³ *ibid*

England League, the premier league, has 88 clubs playing each Saturday, including clubs in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire, and their most prized trophy is a shield. As, so far, the new association covers the same counties, little advantage is to be gained by multiplying organisations.²⁴

It is perhaps true that leagues could have operated inside the AEWHHA in much the same way as they did outside of it. Those affiliated before 1926 had, on sufferance, played for trophies 'for many years', while others had been permitted to do so since 1931 – albeit under a host of conditions. Yet some felt the benefits of AEWHHA membership were not so great as to justify submitting to organisational restrictions or putting up with the pervasive belief that league members were not 'playing the game on the right lines'.²⁵ So they set up their own organisation.

Emergence of the ELHLA

The idea for the ELHLA grew out of a series of Easter contests between the Manchester and Liverpool leagues, although when these head-to-heads started is not clear. Other leagues were gradually invited to send representative teams to this annual event and, in March 1932 – after competing against each other in Liverpool – members of the Manchester, Stockport, Liverpool, Middleton and Lancashire Central leagues came together to discuss setting up an umbrella organisation for their sport. The driving force behind its formation was John Lishman, of the Liverpool LHL,

²⁴ Our special correspondent, Women's hockey, *The Times*, 18 November 1932, 6

²⁵ Affiliation to the All England Women's Hockey Association, *The Hockey Field*, 11 February 1928, 4

which was the first to disaffiliate from the AEWHHA in 1927. Under the governing body's bye-laws, amended the year before, Lishman would have been obliged to step down as the league's honorary secretary the following season, to be replaced by a woman. Instead, the competition withdrew from the AEWHHA and Lishman – who was headmaster of the Waterloo-with-Seaforth Evening Technical School and director of physical education for the Liverpool School Board – set in motion plans for an alternative governing body.

Its first general meeting was held at Milton Hall, Manchester, on Saturday 9 July – but, according to the *Sheffield Star*, several attempts had been made to get a leagues organisation off the ground before then. Its correspondent claimed to have met Lishman many years before the advent of the ELHLA and that 'even in those far-off days [he] was advocating the formation of an association which would band all the leagues together in common interest'.²⁶ Another aim of the ELHLA appears to have been to run women's hockey in a less autocratic, restrictive and elitist way than the AEWHHA. The *Lancashire Daily Post* reported that the leagues governing body was 'following closely along the lines set by the Football Association', and that its founders had the same main objectives – namely 'the fostering of enthusiasm for sport by the organisation of competitive games in which no distinction, save that of excellence in the field, can aid the player who is desirous of gaining the game's highest honours'.²⁷ Despite this, Sheffield Women's Hockey Association was equivocal about the new organisation, deciding that 'affiliation at the moment was not desirable'.²⁸ It was not a

²⁶ Penalty Bully, In the women's hockey world, *Sheffield Star Green 'Un*, 22 October 1932, 6

²⁷ Women's Hockey: first league international, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 23 February 1933, 11

²⁸ Hockey: draw for Sheffield women's cup competition, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 11 November 1932, 8

member of the AEWHHA either, however, having left a few years earlier when the Northern Counties WHA increased the affiliation fee for leagues 'out of all proportion to the benefits which the Association could offer'.²⁹

Sheffield was not the only league that saw no benefit in belonging to a wider network. During and after World War One, competitions emerged in many parts of the north and midlands, including Birmingham, Bradford, Hull, Leeds and Tyneside. Some, including Bradford and Leeds, affiliated to the AEWHHA in the 1920s, but then disappeared from its clubs list and did not re-emerge as members of the ELHLA. Many other leagues – whether because of a lack of interest in, or awareness of, the governing bodies – simply operated outside of them and looked after themselves. 'League organisations... are so self-contained that the necessity for linking up with other organisations is more imaginary than real,' said Sheffield-based hockey writer 'Penalty Bully'. This was a potential concern for both the AEWHHA and the newly formed ELHLA, which – nevertheless – claimed to already represent 250 clubs in Lancashire and Cheshire, and to have 'about 5,000 players under its control'.³⁰ Penalty Bully, however, believed there was another reason the leagues association's 'southern critics... need not become unduly alarmed that the movement is likely to sweep the country'. Having witnessed the previous season's tournament games at Liverpool, the correspondent could 'assure them... that the English Ladies Hockey League is not likely to attract any fresh adherents until the standard of play is considerably improved'.³¹ This poor spectator experience may have been compounded by the leagues not

²⁹ Penalty Bully, In the women's hockey world, *Sheffield Star Green 'un*, 14 October 1933, 3

³⁰ English Ladies' Hockey: big interest of Lancashire and Cheshire clubs, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 11 July 1932, 5

³¹ Penalty Bully, In the women's hockey world, *Sheffield Star Green 'Un*, 22 October 1932, 6

operating under one set of playing rules, as the *Manchester Guardian* observed when an early-season inter-league match 'produced incidents which may provide the first need for action by the English League Hockey Association [sic]'. Stockport beat Manchester 2-1, 'and though Manchester accepted the unfamiliar rulings of Stockport, it probably cost them the game'. The return match would be played under Manchester conditions, the paper reported, but the point at issue was 'whether the new association will deem it expedient to draw up a set of rules under which all hockey leagues will play'.³²

It was the type of issue that the AEWHFA founders had had to grapple with nearly 40 years earlier and, like those pioneers, Lishman had international ambitions for his association. At its inaugural meeting, he reported negotiations were already under way for an English leagues representative side to play Ireland in the 1932/33 season – although it is unclear which side the ELHLA expected to encounter, as no equivalent Irish leagues association existed.³³ An AEWHFA touring side organised by England international Marjorie Pollard had also accepted a challenge to play, although the proposed match was eventually called off because the travel arrangements meant some members of the Northamptonshire county team could not take part. That the fixture was even contemplated, however, suggests lines of communication between the governing bodies were open and cordial, despite the ELHLA saying it had 'so far met with little sympathy from the older body'.³⁴

³² Cheshire women's trials, *Manchester Guardian*, 19 October 1932, 3

³³ In 1939, the ELHLA played the Northern Ireland Ladies Hockey Union (*Belfast Newsletter*, 6 April 1939, 3), but further research is needed to ascertain the identity of earlier Irish opponents

³⁴ Women's hockey: first league international, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 23 February 1933, 11

Cooperation between associations

In the four months from its conception to inception, this new organisation (re)ignited some friction with the AEWHHA – so much so that its inaugural president, Emily S Caley, felt obliged to remind those present at Milton Hall that 'the association's attitude towards alternative bodies working with a similar ultimate object in view, namely the better organisation of women's hockey, should be of a friendly nature and that cooperation should be attempted wherever possible'.³⁵ It was a stance that Lishman sought to adopt when writing a letter to the press explaining the reasons for setting up the new organisation. 'The AEWHHA has done wonderful work for women's hockey in the country,' he wrote:

but it does not cater for leagues having trophies... While the AEWHHA ideal is one which we should like to adopt, we feel that the time to dispense with trophies is not yet come. At present the work-a-day girls who form the bulk of these leagues must have a tangible incentive.³⁶

If Lishman had intended his letter to be conciliatory, however, his closing statement drew the ire of the AEWHHA, which decided it could not go unchallenged. A tersely worded response was published in *The Hockey Field*, with the AEWHHA declaring:

³⁵ English Ladies' Hockey: big interest of Lancashire and Cheshire clubs, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 11 July 1932, 5

³⁶ Editorial notes: league hockey, *The Hockey Field*, 8 October 1932, 3

We do not believe that the 'work-a-day' girl of the north is less ready to enjoy the game for the game's sake than her southern sisters. To accuse her of requiring a 'tangible incentive' is unflattering to say the least, and a statement which we feel is as unjustified as it is insulting.³⁷

This was certainly an evolution from the AEWHHA of 20 years earlier. Then, the governing body had conceded it was 'almost natural' that the 'working girls' of the LHL – precluded from county or territorial teams and, therefore, all hope of being first-class players because they could only play on Saturdays – 'should welcome some additional excitement to add zest to their weekly games'.³⁸ Now, two decades on, the AEWHHA was incredulous that anyone should think players not brought up on the playing fields of Roedean or Cheltenham were any more likely to demand rewards other than the victory.³⁹ Such a defence of 'work-a-day girls' suggests the social make-up of the AEWHHA was becoming more mixed by the 1930s than it had been in 1910. Then, the governing body had tried to stave off interest in leagues among its upper and middle-class members by fuelling the inaccurate perception of the fledgling Ladies Hockey League as being largely for 'working girls'. Interestingly, the LHL – including long-standing members Broughton, Clarendon, Delph, Eccles, Urmston and Withington – remained within the AEWHHA after the emergence of the ELHLA. Renamed the North of England League, it consisted of seven divisions and

³⁷ *ibid*

³⁸ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

³⁹ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 8 December 1910, 115

featured many more sides with obvious works or welfare connections: cotton manufacturer Simpson & Godlee; English Steel; Gardner Engines; the Co-operative Wholesale Society; Magnet and Newton mills; textile firm Tootal; and soap manufacturer Cussons. While more detailed research is needed to ascertain whether players in these teams were drawn from the shopfloor or the back office, their presence indicates that the AEWhA was no longer the preserve of leisured, independently wealthy women.

A similar mix of works, church and grammar school 'old girls' teams – as well as a smattering of club sides – made up the leagues that founded the ELHLA. The Lancashire Central Women's league for instance – which was set up in 1930 as the Leyland & District LHL – featured: Balshaw's, Winckley Square and Blakey Moor Old Girls; Old Chorleians; the Leyland and Birmingham Rubber Co; Leyland Motors (including separate Paint Works and Social Club sides); LMS Railway (Manchester); and Dick, Kerr, a Preston-based locomotive and tramcar manufacturer, more famous for its women's football team. Manchester-based electrical cable manufacturer Glover's also had a team in the Lancashire Central league. It had previously been a member of the LHL, but seemingly preferred to be governed by the new association, so switched to an affiliated competition. Two church sides, Leyland Wesleyans and St Cuthbert's (Preston), plus three club teams – Blackburn Ladies, Hesketh Bank Ladies, and Pentwortham – were also early members of the Lancashire Central league, and a similar combination of clubs could be found within the Stockport & District and Liverpool competitions.

Men in authority

Perhaps the most important factor in the leagues' decision to strike out on their own, however, was the AEWHAs continuing resistance to men holding positions of influence within women's sport. After more than 35 years of self-governance, the governing body insisted that 'organisation... of the game for women by women' was still one of its strongest principles – despite evidence, outlined earlier in this thesis, that men had held executive office within associations affiliated to it. President Hilda Light was a keen defender of this position; she 'maintained that both women and men had much to contribute jointly to the game of hockey, [but] she was... a stout protagonist of the theory that the administration of the game must be left to women and men separately'. Although she would go on to champion closer cooperation between the two codes after 1945, 'any idea of "domination by the men" was firmly rejected by [Light]'. One of her favourite remarks was said to be: 'This is a man's world, but that is no reason to give in.'⁴⁰ She certainly made it clear that she would not give in to the male-dominated leagues on this point, telling the 1931 AGM that the AEWHAs Council was 'disposed to recommend the variation of its ruling regarding the playing for cups', but would adhere 'rigidly to its policy regarding organisation'.⁴¹

Whether this policy was ever formally written into the AEWHAs constitution or simply became an immutable custom over time has still to be established, but it seemed to take on greater significance from the mid-1920s. In 1926, for instance, all AEWHAs-affiliated clubs and associations had been

⁴⁰ Pollard, *Hilda M Light*, 48

⁴¹ AEWHAs AGM minutes, 9 May 1931, UoB Archive A/2/5, 10

given two years to replace any male executive officers they had with women. This harder line on self-governance may have been a consequence of members' increasing confidence in their own – and the association's – standing in the world. After all, these women had given admirable, unstinting and, in many cases, decorated service to their country during World War One, helped achieve partial women's suffrage in 1918, and rebuilt their sport to such a degree that plans for an international federation were well under way. The AEWHHA was also starting to be viewed as the more progressive of the hockey governing bodies in England at this time. Former international Eric Green, writing in *The Sporting Times* about an ongoing dispute between the HA and the International Rules Board (IRB), believed the rules of the men's game needed 'a thorough revision, and in several cases very drastic alterations'. The 1908 Olympic gold medal-winner suggested that the HA confer with the AEWHHA about reconstituting the IRB – but it was not only in England that men were taking note of the women's game.⁴² At the first IFWHA conference in Geneva, in 1930, talks were held with the male-led FIH, which presumably wanted to understand why a separate organisation was even necessary. Helen Armfield's report of the meeting appears to indicate the answer:

The men were far more sympathetic with the idea of women controlling their own game – already a women's committee of the FIH had been appointed, which was to have complete autonomy on all questions relating to women's hockey and to be financially independent. This committee was sitting side by side with the men ...

⁴² Eric Green, Bring the rules of the game up to date, *The Sporting Times*, 3 November 1928, 10

To any who know the conditions of the continent – even up to last year – this is an almost incredible step forward.⁴³

The AEWHHA women who were the driving force behind the IFWHA did not need sympathetic men to grant them autonomy over their own sport: they already had it – and, as with the leagues in England, they were prepared to forfeit members rather than cede any control over their sport to men. Only national associations run solely by women were admitted to the IFWHA, thus ruling out several continental countries, 'whose sport is organised and trained by men, usually to the detriment of the game'.⁴⁴ Rather than seek accommodation with the FIH, the IFWHA – through visits and negotiation – tried to persuade these countries to make themselves eligible for membership by adopting its model of self-governance. Such an approach was largely ineffective before 1945 and, with the exception of Denmark, no continental European nation joined the women's federation. According to Marjorie Pollard, this was 'a bitter disappointment' to the IFWHA, which nevertheless stuck to its position on male administrators and continued to expand in other directions.⁴⁵ After World War Two, an agreement was reached with the FIH to allow its affiliates to compete in IFWHA-sanctioned tournaments, but it would be 1983 before the women's federation – somewhat reluctantly – merged with the men's to secure Olympic recognition for their sport.

The AEWHHA/IFWHA believed playing for trophies was the thin end of the wedge towards professionalism; likewise, they believed men holding

⁴³ AEWHHA AGM Minutes, 9 May 1931, UoB Archive A/2/4

⁴⁴ Argus, Federation conference to be held in Britain, *Sunderland Daily Echo*, 4 March 1939, 9

⁴⁵ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 35

executive office within women's hockey was unnecessary and a potential first step towards a loss of autonomy. A causal connection between the two was even promulgated by some as a reason for the AEWH to remain steadfast in its objection to male officials. In a letter to *The Hockey Field* after the formation of the ELHLA, a correspondent known only as 'CEP', wrote:

The fact that leagues are frequently run by men does appear to open the door to certain abuses. Take the question of trophies, often given by generous but misguided folk who insist upon their being used. Why should men take it upon themselves to assert that women – working or otherwise – can only be induced to play their best for a tangible reward? Surely the women themselves – of whom there would doubtless be many sufficiently intelligent and independent to take the true sporting attitude – might be allowed to speak on the subject. But this is precisely what no body of women can do while it is governed by men officials and told exactly what to think.⁴⁶

'It is an unpleasant truth that male officialdom does sometimes mean exploitation of women,' continued CEP, before citing an 'extreme case' from the previous season involving women cricket players. They had been used as a 'catch' for gate money – 'not because the men promoters wished the women to play and enjoy the cricket, but because the men's 2nd XI only attracted a crowd worth 10/-, but to see the women play in trousers spectators were willing to pay double'. CEP concluded that:

⁴⁶ CEP, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 10 December 1932, 5

For this kind of thing we can feel no gratitude and when this is added to the fact that the men promoters of certain leagues have made no secret of their hostility to the AEWHHA, that association, in fairness to the thousands of women players whose interests it guards, must... record its disapprobation.⁴⁷

This the AEWHHA did, although not in such strident terms. While reiterating that many leagues had, in the past, been in the hands of men and not women, it urged caution over the type of governance being promised by the ELHLA. 'We feel very strongly,' it said, 'that women league players should consider the future of their hockey before allowing themselves to be led into what may prove to be a blind alley.'⁴⁸

Reaction to the ELHLA

While the AEWHHA was understandably concerned about the emergence of a rival governing body – especially one run largely by men – there was a mixed reaction to the ELHLA among hockey correspondents. The *Manchester Guardian* declared that the new association had 'created real enthusiasm among the leagues'⁴⁹ and that 'special interest' would be taken in how the 'Federation' would work. It added:

For some reason which it is not easy to understand, because they welcome competition in the university games for which there are trophy awards, the All England Association look askance on women's

⁴⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁸ Editorial notes: league hockey, *The Hockey Field*, 8 October 1932, 3

⁴⁹ Hockey: Lancashire Ladies' prospects, *Manchester Guardian*, 28 September 1932, 4

hockey being played under the league system. Accordingly, the leagues are beginning to look after themselves in the North, where they have a great hold.⁵⁰

Sheffield's Penalty Bully was more explicit in blaming the AEWHHA for the emergence of an alternative governing body, saying that the older body's otherwise excellent work for the game:

must not be allowed to overshadow the wonderful organisation of the leagues... the AEWHHA, if they [sic] are to gain strength, must organise a programme for the benefit of clubs which... will draw adherents from other organisations. In the past, they have shown indifference to provide such a programme, and are now paying the penalty for this short-sighted policy.⁵¹

Both commentators agreed, however, that John Lishman's plan for a league international match at the end of the ELHLA's first season was a bit ambitious, and they urged the new association not to run before it could walk. It is 'not difficult to visualise inter-county matches among the leagues in the near future', said the *Manchester Guardian*, but 'it may be a particularly bold policy which aims at league international games'.⁵² Penalty Bully also felt the ELHLA would do better to concentrate on its domestic game:

⁵⁰ Hockey: women's season opens, *Manchester Guardian*, 14 September 1932, 4

⁵¹ Penalty Bully, In the women's hockey world, *Sheffield Star Green 'un*, 17 December 1932, 3

⁵² Hockey: women's season opens, *Manchester Guardian*, 14 September 1932, 4

What is... of paramount importance is that each league organisation shall be efficiently managed so that the usual inter-club game is properly controlled... The scheme for a national organisation of leagues in itself may be in every way commendable, but before its present members embark on such an ambitious programme they would be well advised to perfect their own organisation with a view to improving their playing standard, which at the moment is terribly low.⁵³

As already mentioned, the quality of play may have been affected by leagues adhering to different rules, but the standard of public hockey pitches was also a factor – and it had long been so. In 1922, when an LHL representative team was soundly beaten by every team it encountered on its tour of the South, it was said that 'the splendid condition of the grounds [had] entirely nonplussed the Manchester players, who are not accustomed to such playing pieces'. As a result, a 'strong agitation' was started for the Manchester league to buy a suitable ground 'in order that their representative side may have every opportunity for the improvement of their game'.⁵⁴ It is not known whether such a plan was ever set in motion, but the North West was far from alone in lacking decent recreational facilities, as evidenced by the formation of the NPFA in 1925. It claimed that:

⁵³ Penalty Bully, In the women's hockey world, *Sheffield Star Green 'Un*, 22 October 1932, 6

⁵⁴ Penalty Bully, Women's hockey, *Sheffield Star Green 'Un*, 30 December 1922, 7. The Manchester league's results on its tour to the South of England were: 1-9 v Surrey; 2-8 v Middlesex; 0-5 v Kent; 2-5 v Leicester; 0-8 v Lancashire

From nearly every city, town and village comes the cry from our boys and girls, and our young men and young women for more and yet more playing fields, and so great is the demand, and so far short of normal requirements the supply, that in every big city today a really critical, and, indeed, tragic situation exists.⁵⁵

It was a reality that John Lishman, as secretary of the Liverpool league, still recognised in 1928, when he described many local grounds and dressing rooms as 'a disgrace to the Corporation'. There had also been numerous complaints about the 'lack of civic sympathy with the [women's hockey] code', for which grounds were 'uniformly inferior to the average men's pitches'. 'Cannot the Corporation... buy 100 acres of land in various districts on the outskirts of the city? It would be a good business proposition,' suggested Lishman, who added:

A hockey pitch is quite as important as a bowling green and deserves to be laid as accurately and carefully. Many players have got cut faces, broken noses, broken teeth, broken fingers, and sometimes worse accidents, entirely because of the lumpy and uneven state of the ground. A hockey pitch, once laid, will last forever, so the expense cannot count. But even if the expense were a hundred times as great, it would be a cheap investment. It gives pleasure and health now, and lays the foundation of a long and healthy life.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Nancy Astor et al, Correspondence: more playing fields for the people, *Western Mail*, 4 April 1925, 11

⁵⁶ G N Osborne, Hockey chat, *Liverpool Football Echo*, 22 November 1930, 7

Two years later, G N Osborne was reporting that Lishman's suggestion had 'fallen on ears that are totally deaf to the claims of a section of a sporting community that is almost 2,000 strong', and he asked: 'Why should bowling greens and putting greens have such a monopoly?'⁵⁷ It is unclear – but unlikely – that the situation had improved very much by the time the ELHLA was launched in 1932. So it is perhaps testament to the enthusiasm for hockey that leagues could generate and sustain that women were prepared to risk quite serious injury to play. Indeed, they were willing to do so in such numbers that the AEWHHA was forced to consider another recruitment campaign.

The older governing body had long been concerned about its inability to persuade large numbers of clubs in England to join its ranks. It had organised its first major drive for new members in 1908, when it seemed the late-Victorian hockey 'craze' was beginning to fade. By the 1913/14 season, however, it was again noting a 'very rapid increase in the number of unaffiliated clubs all over the country'.⁵⁸ It had rebuilt after World War One, in part by allowing leagues to affiliate, but now – after a decade of uncomfortable accommodation with such organisations – the AEWHHA was faced with a new threat to its membership figures: an alternative governing body for women's hockey. 'Determined that the existence and influence of the [older] national organisation... be brought to the notice of every hockey player in the country', the AEWHHA decided on a propaganda campaign.⁵⁹ A detailed study of its position led its Council to conclude that this work 'was not of a temporary nature and [that] the appointment of a permanent committee might be

⁵⁷ *ibid*

⁵⁸ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 30 October 1913, 19

⁵⁹ AEWHHA Affiliation Subcommittee minutes, 13 November 1933, UoB Archive Hockey AEWHHA Misc (un-archived)

desirable'. So, in November 1933, an Affiliation Subcommittee, chaired by Helen Armfield, was set up to discuss 'the question of leagues' – specifically, the eight-division Manchester Sunday School Union (SSU) Ladies League, which the AEWHHA was keen to have among its ranks. Armfield's committee decided it should meet such organisations 'with an open mind and hear all sides', so former Lancashire and North player Sarah Taylor Ashworth was tasked with securing the SSU's affiliation.

Having lived in Bury, Lancashire, all her life, Ashworth's interests were said to be 'firmly bound up with those of the North of England'. Several years earlier, she had even become involved with 'one of the largest Northern leagues' after it decided to ask an 'outsider' to be its chairman.⁶⁰ This, presumably, was the AEWHHA-affiliated LHL – aka the North of England League – and Ashworth was still in post when she began her task to recruit new organisations. Why the AEWHHA allowed one of its Council members to be chairman of a league that was still playing for trophies is not clear; surely it could only add to the charge of hypocrisy that many people had levelled at the governing body for its position on cups? Perhaps it believed that having someone with a foot in both camps would prove that the AEWHHA was not unsympathetic to the way leagues ran their affairs – although the Affiliation Subcommittee was clear that 'once members, [leagues] should be shown from within the game without trophies.' Is this why it targeted the SSU, believing a welfare organisation might be more willing to give up its trophies in exchange for the kudos of being AEWHHA affiliated? Interestingly, in the minutes of the

⁶⁰ JFS, 'These important people': Miss S T Ashworth, AE Council member, *The Hockey Field*, 25 January 1936, 5

subcommittee's meeting of 18 January 1934, the sentence '*anything* should be done to make the leagues part of the association' is amended to read '*as much as possible* should be done' – an indication, perhaps, that the AEWHHA was more concerned than it wanted to admit about the emergence of a rival organisation to which leagues might affiliate.⁶¹

Its plan of attack with the new recruitment campaign was, it seems, to curtail possible expansion of the ELHLA by persuading leagues unaffiliated to either organisation that the AEWHHA was the better option. The subcommittee agreed that 'the question of trophies in so far as it affects their domestic play should not enter into the question':

The meaning of the league members' medal is exactly the same to them as the meaning of a badge to us... Encouragement should be given to show that the AEWHHA has nothing against the organisation of the league... A league should be allowed to play under their own control in domestic matters but should come directly under the AEWHHA control when playing outside matches.⁶²

Ashworth's overtures to the Sunday School Union league appear to have been received with a degree of positivity, and it was decided 'that the council should lose no time in investigating all possible ways by which, without interfering with the domestic policy of the leagues, they can bring the associations of hockey players within the membership of the AEWHHA'.⁶³

⁶¹ AEWHHA Affiliation Subcommittee minutes, 18 January 1934, UoB Archive Hockey AEWHHA Misc (un-archived). Emphasis added

⁶² *ibid*

⁶³ AEWHHA Affiliation Subcommittee minutes, 5 March 1934, UoB Archive Hockey AEWHHA Misc (unarchived)

Confusingly, the subcommittee recommended amendments to the rules on playing for trophies that had, according to the 1931 AGM minutes, already been agreed – including allowing leagues that affiliated after May 1926 to play for the trophies they had, but not to accept new ones. While it seems unlikely that changes voted for by the membership three years earlier would not have been implemented, the affiliation subcommittee reported that its suggested alterations to the bye-laws were passed at the 1934 annual general meeting. It then approved the printing and distribution of 100 leaflets – drafted by Ashworth – which outlined ‘the value of your league to the Association’ and ‘the value of the Association to your league’. In a list of five points, leagues were said to:

- **Add strength to [the governing body’s] territorial and national associations**
- **Enable help to be given to players throughout the country**
- **Work towards raising the standard of play**
- **Have the opportunity of assisting with the administration of the game in its own territory**
- **Attest to the value of the national organisation of the game.**⁶⁴

With no subtle acronyms to be made from its value to leagues, the AEWHHA outlined that affiliates would: become members of the IFWHHA; receive a free copy of the rules, as well as a directory of affiliated clubs, the Annual Report, ‘and other interesting and helpful publications’; get reduced admission to

⁶⁴ AEWHHA Affiliation Subcommittee, *Your League* leaflet, UoB Archive Hockey AEWHHA Misc (unarchived)

territorial and international matches; have voting rights at the AGM; and obtain coaching for players and umpires. Players would be eligible for territorial and international teams, and leagues with county status could enter the territorial tournament.⁶⁵

The subcommittee agreed 'that it would be advisable to meet the officials of any leagues who would be likely to cooperate' – and its approach met with some success.⁶⁶ At the start of the 1934/35 season, the Manchester SSU league and the Hull & District LHL joined the AEWH, to boost to 203 the number of league clubs affiliated to the Northern WHA.⁶⁷ However, such wooing of the leagues by the AEWH, including reducing the affiliation fee from 3s per club to 1s, was like 'closing the stable door after the horse has gone', according to Penalty Bully. The Sheffield writer – while frequently a harsh critic of the standard and ambition of league hockey – viewed the AEWH's efforts to undermine the movement as too little too late:

Despite the continued efforts of its detractors, [league hockey] is now a thoroughly organised and firmly established phase of women's sport... a few years ago, a conciliatory spirit by the Northern Association towards leagues as a whole would have enabled them [sic] to control this vast new body of players. Today, however, circumstances are changed, and I think that these belated efforts of the territorial organisation are doomed to failure.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *ibid*

⁶⁶ AEWH Affiliation Subcommittee minutes, 5 March 1934, UoB Archive Hockey AEWH Misc (unarchived)

⁶⁷ AEWH AGM minutes, 31 May 1935, UoB Archive A/2/5

⁶⁸ Penalty Bully, In the women's hockey world, *Sheffield Star Green 'un*, 14 October 1933, 3

The AEWHHA, however, was still hopeful that leagues could be shown the error of their ways and that, one day, they would all follow the example of the University of London Athletic Union (ULAU), which had decided to abolish cup play. In a step 'not taken hastily', according to *The Hockey Field*, the ULAU had joined the Civil Service and London Business Houses leagues in giving up playing for trophies – a decision that the magazine believed had 'come at a time when a courageous lead of this kind is much needed'.⁶⁹ Certainly, it would help the AEWHHA to counter some of the criticism it faced for allowing university and school sides to play for trophies while banning club teams from doing so. ULAU's youthful players, it could argue, had 'reached full development and understanding of the principle "the game for game's sake"' – and the AEWHHA was keen to claim credit for helping the students, business houses and civil servants come to this realisation.⁷⁰

A high-handed policy of total abolition of cups would undoubtedly have done more harm than good. Under the tolerant jurisdiction of the AEWHHA, no less than three hockey playing associations have, within the last few years, abolished cup play of their own free will... [which] goes far to prove that the high ideal set by the AEWHHA is one well worth preserving.⁷¹

Helen Armfield, who was also president of the Southern WHA, agreed that the policy of play for play's sake had 'been one of the main foundations on which the Association has built up the position which it holds in the world of sport

⁶⁹ Editorial notes: a lead from the ULAU, *The Hockey Field*, 10 March 1934, 3-4

⁷⁰ C E P, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 10 December 1932, 5

⁷¹ Editorial notes: a lead from the ULAU, *The Hockey Field*, 10 March 1934, 3-4

today', and she congratulated the ULAU on its decision. 'I do not believe any association has ever regretted giving up its cup when once the step has been taken,' she added.⁷²

The challenge of cups

While the AEWhA was lauding organisations that had abandoned trophies, however, the ELHLA was preparing to adopt a new one. At the start of the 1934/35 season, it resurrected the idea of an English Knockout Cup competition, which had first been mooted two years earlier, but abandoned on the grounds of cost.⁷³ It was to be run on the same lines as the FA Cup, and a trophy had been secured from Frederick Corlett Johnson, director of Bootle-based dyers and cleaners Johnson Brothers. The organisers also hoped to present gold and silver medals to the winners and runners-up.⁷⁴ Again, Penalty Bully – while supportive of league hockey generally – was less than complimentary about this latest innovation by the ELHLA, 'this Lancashire organisation that masquerades under a national title':

I have not heard of any teams outside the Lancashire area who intend competing, and no doubt it will be carried out by the enthusiasts of Liverpool, Manchester and Stockport with all the seriousness of a national affair.⁷⁵

⁷² H G Armfield, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 10 March 1934, 7

⁷³ Organising women's hockey, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 8 November 1932, 5

⁷⁴ Dowthwaite, *Lancashire Central Women's Hockey Association 1930-2010*

⁷⁵ Penalty Bully, 'National' hockey competition on lines of FA Cup, *Sheffield Star Green 'Un*, 17 November 1934, 6

It is true that the competition's reach was more regional than national, and the ELHLA did indeed try to lend the competition gravitas, announcing the date and place of the draw in the newspapers.⁷⁶ Little information has been found about the first Cup competition, however; Lancashire Central league was given permission by the ELHLA to play as an area, so the eight teams it entered faced each other in the early rounds. Among them were the eventual winners, Leyland Motors, who beat Liverpool Olympic 3-1 in the inaugural final at Knotty Ash, their opponents being one player short for the entire match.⁷⁷ The same two sides battled it out again in the 1936 final – with the same outcome – but Stockport took the honours in 1937. By the following season, 24 teams had entered the competition and, before long, the leagues association was having to deal with the problem of fitting English Cup matches into an increasingly congested season. 'One of the problems of a general competition within an organisation so large as the English Women's [sic] Hockey Leagues Association is a question of the ability of clubs to play as many as five, six or more games in addition to their normal league competitions,' reported the *Lancashire Daily Post*, which listed the many and varied trophies for which EWHLA [sic] members already competed:

- **Liverpool League** – Messrs Lewis's Cup (senior section), Diamine Cup (intermediate), Mrs Arthur Moore's Cup (junior)
- **Bolton League** – J F Steele Cup ('A' section), Davenport Cup ('B' section), 'C' section trophy
- **Stockport League** – senior and junior flags

⁷⁶ Central League clubs in English Cup draw, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 17 October 1934, 9

⁷⁷ Hockey cup for Leyland, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 22 April 1935, 9

- **Lancashire Central league** – Douglas Cup
- **Wigan** – Swift Cup
- **Leigh & District League** – Arthur Crooke Shield
- **Bury League** – Rose Bowl competition.⁷⁸

The concern was that teams hoping to do well in their respective league and knockout competitions were not entering the English Cup, and the ELHLA was keen to make its showpiece event more representative of the '200 or so' clubs affiliated to it.⁷⁹ So Thomas A Hart, secretary of the Lancashire Central league, proposed that the preliminary rounds of the English Cup be merged into the initial rounds of each league's respective knock-out competition. In this way, 'every affiliated team would gain a direct interest in the [national] competition by becoming an actual competitor'. The semi-finalists from each league's cup contest would 'go into the hat, together with four of another league whose geographical proximity shall obviate the necessity for extended travel'. This process would then be repeated until only four semi-finalists remained, to be drawn at random.⁸⁰

While the English Cup had its teething problems – and attracted ridicule from some quarters for its far-from-national reach – the ELHLA's attempts to make life easier and cheaper for clubs to take part at least showed a willingness to listen to the needs of the membership. The AEWHHA had frequently been accused of not taking enough interest in the activities of

⁷⁸ Hockey notes, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 11 January 1939, 9

⁷⁹ *ibid*

⁸⁰ The English Hockey Cup, *Liverpool Daily Post*, 11 January 1939, 12

grassroots hockey, and it would be more than 57 years before a similar cup competition was organised by the older governing body.

Olympic participation

In March 1935, the AEWHHA marked its 40th anniversary with a dinner in London. It was attended by around 450 players and officials, including members of the first English international team and four association presidents. Lilian Faithfull 'received an especially warm welcome' and told the gathering that she was glad to still see among the present-day players 'those great qualities laid down in the early days – traditional good sportsmanship, good humour and never-failing hospitableness'. 'Arch-globetrotter' Edith Thompson gave accounts of the many tours she had undertaken with English teams to America, Australia, Africa and continental Europe, and Catharine Gaskell outlined the AEWHHA's role in forming the international federation.⁸¹ While the anniversary dinner was an occasion to look back at past achievements, the current administration's thoughts would soon return to IFWHA business and overseas travel, as the third conference and tournament was scheduled to be held in the USA in 1936. After the exhibition matches in Geneva, the first tournament proper had been held in Denmark in 1933, when the host country lined up against England and the other Home Nations, plus the USA, the Netherlands and Germany. Three years on, however, the range of competing countries was about to be diminished as a result, the AEWHHA claimed, of the conflicting interests of the FIH's male administrators – and the over-emphasis on competition.

⁸¹ Miss V M Brain, Big London rally of players, *Gloucestershire Echo*, 6 March 1935, 7

Set up in 1924 to lobby for men's hockey to be reinstated to the Olympic Games, the FIH – to which many European women's teams were affiliated as a result of being connected to men's associations – had since tried to get women's hockey recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The IFWHA, however, had no desire to take part in Pierre de Coubertin's four-yearly festival of sport. Shortly after it was set up, the question was raised as to whether the IFWHA would take steps to participate in the 1928 Amsterdam Games.⁸² No decision was reached, but the issue came up again as the Federation began preparations for its 1936 conference and tournament in Philadelphia. Reporting back from the IFWHA Council, Helen Armfield told the AEWHA that the Federation 'felt that the competitive spirit which is fostered [by the Olympics] and the time of the year at which Games take place make it undesirable for women hockey players to take part'.⁸³ The FIH's application for women's hockey to be included in the 1936 Berlin Games was rejected by the IOC; then, as now, it only recognised sports with a single international governing body. Not wanting the women to 'be cheated out of an international tournament', however, the FIH asked Germany to organise one. This took place in Berlin over Easter 1936, with six teams – Austria, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Hungary and Spain – taking part. France and Belgium withdrew at the last minute, while England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales were 'obliged to refuse' their invitations 'owing to the IFWHA conference and tournament falling in the same year'.⁸⁴

⁸² W A Baumann, Olympic Games – IFWHA, *The Hockey Field*, 5 February 1927, 10

⁸³ Minutes of AEWHA AGM, 31 May 1935, UoB Archive A/2/4

⁸⁴ Women's international tournament in Berlin, *The Hockey Field*, 3 October 1936, 14-15

Having two international governing bodies for women's hockey would be a stumbling block to female participation in the Olympic movement for the next 40 years, but whether the FIH's alternative competition was an effort to undermine the women's Federation and force the issue of unification needs further research. It was the case, however, that no continental European teams travelled to Philadelphia for the IFWHA tournament in September/October. Instead, the Home Nations and the USA were joined by South Africa, Australia and an 'Etceteras' side made up of players whose countries were not represented at the event.⁸⁵ *The Hockey Field* was in no doubt that it had been 'impossible for any continental team to go... because women's hockey on the continent is governed by the men's associations and they were more interested in the Olympic Games this year than in the Philadelphia conference'.⁸⁶ In the wake of the infamous 'Hitler Games' that took place that summer, however, the IFWHA's decision not to lobby for inclusion in the Olympics – and to remain independent of the FIH – appeared to have been justified. It also reinforced the women's belief in independent governance and their tournaments' amateur ethos:

Unlike the Olympic Games (which are also supposed to assist in the cause of peace) there is no malicious rivalry between the teams participating [in the IFWHA tournament]. The whole spirit of the tournament is based on friendly competition and since there are no

⁸⁵ Off to Philadelphia, *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 30 September 1936, 7

⁸⁶ Editorial notes: hockey's part in promoting peace, *The Hockey Field*, 21 November 1936, 3

trophies or prizes at stake, there can be no bitterness in defeat or crowing over victory.⁸⁷

While the IFWHA was asserting its independence and extolling the virtues of amateurism on the world stage, its lead association – the AEWHHA – was finding it increasingly difficult to do the same thing domestically. The fledgling leagues association was gathering momentum and gaining in confidence, and the AEWHHA would soon have to contemplate reaching an accommodation with the male-led organisation and relaxing its rules on playing for cups and in competitions.

Criticism of leagues

In the same way that the Olympic movement was condemned by the IFWHA for encouraging 'malicious rivalry' that led to 'bitterness in defeat or crowing over victory', so the early leagues movement faced criticism for nurturing bad sportsmanship. In the 1933/34 season, a top-of-the-table clash between two unbeaten sides in Division A of the Liverpool league had resulted in a 'very robust' tussle, after which one team won outright. 'You would, of course, think that the losers would give a hearty, sporting cheer for the winners,' commented G N Osborne, of the *Liverpool Echo*. 'But... the losers are apparently disgruntled at the way things have turned out, and now they ask for a return game *with neutral umpires*.' In defence of match officials – 'voluntary officials

⁸⁷ *ibid*. Having failed to get women's hockey in the 1952 Olympic programme, the FIH held its first women's championship in Amsterdam in 1948, as a replacement for the Games. In 1950, it allowed member federations to 'affiliate their women's sections provisionally to the IFWHA'. (FIH, Hockey & Olympism, LA84 Foundation – digital.la84.org/digital/collection/p17103coll1/id/32064/rec/1: accessed: 29 March 2019)

at that', stressed Osborne, the majority of whom 'are competent enough and keen students of their job' – the former England international reminded players of 'a famous tenet written in letters of gold: "Accept the umpire's ruling like a sportsman."' ⁸⁸

The secretary of the club involved was one of several league officials and players to write to the *Liverpool Echo* to protest 'the tenor of [Osborne's] observations'. 'We... asked for neutral umpires to be appointed in fairness to both teams, as in the previous match our team had to play the referee as well,' he explained, before adding:

Our main reason was to stop the very rough and dangerous play which took place, and is not hockey, and we offered to concede the points rather than have our players more seriously hurt than they were in the previous match, stating that we had hockey first and league honours afterwards... If a referee is unfair, it is no insult for a team to ask for neutral umpires rather than have a continuance of bad feeling which is likely to arise. ⁸⁹

Osborne was aghast at the correspondent's 'rather ill-chosen words which state that a team had to "play the referee as well". Such remarks are best left out of any controversy.' As for rough and dangerous play, that was 'for the players themselves to remedy. The referee can penalise dangerous play, but he cannot prevent it if players wish to lose control over themselves as to seriously hurt each other.' Finally, he took issue with the club secretary's belief

⁸⁸ G N Osborne, The league or the team spirit, *Liverpool Echo*, 13 January 1934, 7

⁸⁹ G N Osborne, On umpiring, *Liverpool Echo*, 20 January 1934, 7

that there was no insult in asking for neutral officials. 'Every umpire, whether "attached" or not, should be regarded as neutral in every sense of the term,' he said:

It does not matter two hoots whether an umpire is "unfair" or hopelessly biased. Put it down to incompetency rather than definite favouritism. "Unfair" is the nastiest word in amateur sport. Please remember we are amateurs in hockey and play for the game's sake before anything else... That is where the whole spirit of sportsmanship comes in. For the love of sporting principles, lose with a grin and a handshake, and stop taking about "dud" umpires.⁹⁰

While generally supportive of the league and 'its admirable organisation, which has brought hockey to no fewer than 80 clubs and about 1,100 women in this city', Osborne questioned whether 'this high feeling [would] have arisen if points and possible championships were not in the offing':

If the incentive of trophies and medals... is going to create 'very robust' rough and tumbles, disgruntled losers and insulted umpires, I would suggest the whole idea of trophies be washed right out... Have your league tables by all means for the sake of the regular weekly fixtures they maintain. But if there must be an incentive, play for flags, bits of string, anything that is of no value apart from the honour of winning. I say this not because of the professionalism which might creep in (I cannot for one moment feel that the taint would ever affect the

⁹⁰ *ibid*

Liverpool League) but for the sake of playing a good code with a grin and secure in the knowledge that 'after all the game's the thing'.⁹¹

Liverpool League secretary John Lishman had also complained about the comments made by Osborne, insisting that his organisation had 'no such thing as rough play or answering back by players'.⁹² He may have considered such admonishment for disrespecting match officials a sign of progress, however, as – the season before – the ELHLA had been castigated for club matches allegedly being played with no umpires at all.

The leagues association had come under fire for this after Lishman had defied the naysayers and arranged the first 'leagues international' at the end of the ELHLA's inaugural season – not against the Irish, but against a Scottish representative side in Glasgow on 4 March 1933.⁹³ 'Whether we are to consider this an international encounter is not made quite clear,' commented Penalty Bully, of the *Sheffield Star Green 'Un*. The columnist's concern was that 'many of the clubs affiliated to the English body [would] be playing their inter-club matches under the most elementary conditions – many even without an umpire' while this 'mock international' was being staged. Describing the fixture as no more than a team of Lancashire players against a representative Glasgow XI, Penalty Bully claimed it was impossible to enthuse about such encounters while the rank and file were playing under inadequate conditions: 'Small wonder that the All England Women's Hockey Association are [sic] not unduly perturbed at the activities of this newly formed body who are attempting

⁹¹ G N Osborne, The league or the team spirit, *Liverpool Echo*, 13 January 1934, 7

⁹² G N Osborne, Rotting the fabric, *Liverpool Echo*, 27 January 1934, 7

⁹³ Women's hockey: first league international, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 23 February 1933, 11

to emulate the governing association without undertaking any of the spade work.⁹⁴ The fact that the first international arranged by the AEWH, against 'Ireland' in 1896, was also little more than a representative side of the governing body versus Alexandra College, Dublin, appears to have been lost on Penalty Bully. In its early days, too, the AEWH was criticised – by a member of its own committee – for not doing enough to organise and promote the domestic game in England. Nevertheless, it grew its membership and established itself as an influential governing body, so it was perhaps premature to claim that the AEWH was not unduly perturbed by the emergence of the ELHLA.

Despite the inaugural leagues international being played in persistent rain, the *Lancashire Daily Post* claimed that 'three thousand enthusiastic spectators saw a rousing game' on the old Renton Ground in Glasgow. The ELHLA won 2-1 and alongside a picture of the winning team arriving back at Preston rail station, the paper declared that: 'English rivalry in games with Scotland [had] found further expression in the match between two elevens representing the Women's Hockey Leagues of the two countries.' Edith Rowcroft, Balshaw Grammar School Old Girls' 'clever centre forward' was said to have been outstanding for the ELHLA, and although she didn't get on the scoresheet, she was 'always in the thick of the fight'.⁹⁵ At least one representative from each of the Lancashire Central, Liverpool, Manchester, Middleton and Stockport leagues was included in the 1933 ELHLA team, but for the return match – at Bryant & May's Diamond Match Works, in Litherland,

⁹⁴ Penalty Bully, In the women's hockey world, *Sheffield Star Green 'un*, 4 March 1933, 3

⁹⁵ Women's hockey: first league international, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 23 February 1933, 11; Women's hockey: international at Glasgow, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 7 March 1933, 9

Liverpool, the following year – the Lancashire Central League dominated selection, with seven players in the side.⁹⁶ It is unclear how these early league international teams were chosen, but by the 1937/38 season, the ELHLA had appointed a five-man selection committee: the Messrs Thomas Hart and F W Bruce (Lancashire Central); W B Preston (Liverpool); H Barnes (Stockport); and E Taylor (Wigan). Their remit was to attend important games in the various ELHLA areas from January to March – particularly those in which representative teams of different leagues were opposing each other – and pick a side to take on the Scottish Leagues at Stockport on 9 April 1938.⁹⁷ This would be the sixth annual fixture between the countries, and whether commentators such as Penalty Bully yet considered them bona fide international encounters, others certainly did. Leyland Motors player Isobel Smith led the ELHLA side in 1934 and 1935, and when she married in February 1936, the *Liverpool Echo* described her as the former 'captain of the English Ladies' hockey team'.⁹⁸ The *Manchester Guardian*, meanwhile, referred to the annual fixtures as 'internationals' and, in 1938, carried photographs of both the English and Scottish teams.⁹⁹

Just as England v Ireland had established itself as the season finale in the early years of the AEWH, so England v Scotland had – by the 1938/39 season – become the leagues' much-anticipated end-of-season contest. The ELHLA had also established a 'national' cup competition and its membership was continuing to expand: the number of women hockey players in Lancashire

⁹⁶ Hockey players' test: Scottish rivals, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 11 April 1934, 9

⁹⁷ Women's hockey: county preparations, *Manchester Guardian*, 27 October 1937, 3

⁹⁸ Former chairman's son weds, *Liverpool Echo*, 18 February 1936, 7; Elizabeth, Women in the north-west: a record, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 4 April 1935, 8

⁹⁹ Women's international league hockey teams, *Manchester Guardian*, 11 April 1938, 4

alone was estimated at a 'conservative' 6,000, 'the leagues being so strong in membership'.¹⁰⁰ There were seven affiliated leagues – including Liverpool, with 'more than 1,000 registered players', and Bury & District, which had 'almost doubled its membership' – and the ELHLA had also set up a National Leagues Umpires Association.¹⁰¹ Despite its best efforts at countering the attraction of competitions and trophies, many within the AEWHHA were beginning to realise that the ELHLA's influence and popularity in the North were only growing. It could no longer simply wait and hope that the 'pot hunters' would see the error of their ways, and *The Hockey Field* began to gauge readers' reactions to a potential merger of the organisations.

'Is amalgamation possible?'

The magazine outlined (again) the main differences between the ELHLA and the AEWHHA – namely, trophies, men and representative hockey. On the latter point, it stated that: 'Members of the AEWHHA have to bear, themselves, all expenses incurred in connection with tournaments, tours, county matches or international matches. All that they can expect to receive towards reducing such expenses is hospitality when touring abroad and occasional travelling allowances.' Consequently:

to be an international, and even more an international "tourist", a player must be the happy possessor of both time and money. Before she can even aspire to a territorial team she must go to a tournament which involves a week off from work and a hotel bill; while to play in matches

¹⁰⁰ G N Osborne, Hockey developments, *Liverpool Echo*, 11 March 1939, 2

¹⁰¹ English association: centralising the leagues, *Liverpool Daily Post*, 4 January 1939, 12

means further days off and considerable travelling expenses. The English Ladies Hockey League [sic] – perhaps because of its more compact membership – is able to cut down expenses to a minimum. When players are engaged in representative matches, they are guests either of their own league or association, or of their opponents.¹⁰²

Interestingly, an almost identical article – outlining the same points of contention between the organisations – had appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* two weeks earlier.¹⁰³ This had drawn a firm response from the AEWHHA president Hilda Light, who was keen to emphasise that the association had 'room and a welcome for every type of women's hockey'. The policy 'to discourage playing for cups and to subordinate as far as possible actual competitive spirit in our games' had, she insisted, resulted in 'the truly amateur spirit in which our games are played'. However, Light explained:

We fully recognise... that changing conditions require flexible methods and have already made provision, under certain safeguards, for this aspect of league hockey. This provision has been accepted very happily by the several leagues whom we are proud to number in our membership.¹⁰⁴

If Light believed the safe-guarded provisions already made by the AEWHHA would be enough to bring about amalgamation, she was quickly disabused of

¹⁰² Editorial: leagues and the association, *The Hockey Field*, 22 October 1938, 3

¹⁰³ A Correspondent, Organising bodies' views, *Manchester Guardian*, 5 October 1938, 3

¹⁰⁴ Hilda M Light, Women's hockey: 'organising bodies' views', *Manchester Guardian*, 12 October 1938, 3

the notion by the ELHLA's response to her letter. 'The policy of the AEWHHA would appear to suggest that to legislate against competitive hockey is to produce better sportsmanship. By making it impossible for a large number of girls to play for cups they endeavour to make better sportswomen,' wrote its press secretary, Thomas A Hart, who added:

The ELHLA believe that women can take part in competitive games without any violation of the true sporting spirit. They have every confidence – and this is substantiated by actual experience – that cup games are played in as friendly a spirit and with as much good fellowship as any where the competitive element is ignored.¹⁰⁵

Hart also took issue with Light's rebuttal of the *Manchester Guardian's* assertion that players had to attend a tournament to be selected for a territorial side. She did not challenge the contention that it was 'expensive of both time and money' to aspire to representative honours, and admitted 'for obvious reasons, that a great deal of the selection of such teams must take place on such occasions'. But, she added, 'all [territories] would undoubtedly make special arrangements to see players of real promise and merit, apart from tournament games.'¹⁰⁶ The ELHLA challenged this, saying the need to attend a selection tournament had been emphasised in a newspaper article written by the national organiser of the Women's Team Games Board – AEWHHA

¹⁰⁵ T A Hart, Women's hockey: 'organising bodies' views', *Manchester Guardian*, 19 October 1938, 3

¹⁰⁶ Light, Women's hockey: 'organising bodies' views', *Manchester Guardian*, 12 October 1938, 3

stalwart and former hockey international Marjorie Pollard. According to Hart, it was she who had made the comment about 'a seaside hotel bill' and a week off work. She had gone on to say that playing in territorial matches incurred 'further days off, with some travelling expenses', while going abroad with an English touring team meant paying the fare to the country concerned. "Can a working girl do all this?" I was asked point-blank the other day,' Pollard apparently wrote. 'The answer is obvious. "So representative hockey is a game for those with money and leisure is it?" And I had to admit that, at the moment, perhaps it was.'¹⁰⁷

Despite the AEWHHA president's public statement about territorial tournaments, the contention about having to attend to be selected was published again in *The Hockey Field* 10 days later. The editor, Nora White – who had succeeded her husband, Eustace, in the role after the sports journalist had died suddenly in 1923 – appears to have reproduced the *Manchester Guardian's* article almost in its entirety.¹⁰⁸ Whether she was the original author and so felt at liberty to re-use it cannot be ascertained, but – this time – it was AEWHHA honorary secretary Helen Armfield who took issue with its contents. In a letter published the following week, she insisted that it was 'quite erroneous to say that players... bear the entire expense in connection with representative hockey:

The Association has for years paid travelling expenses to all international matches; it also pays hotel bills if the players have to be away for a night and a generous subsistence allowance for away

¹⁰⁷ Hart, Women's hockey: 'organising bodies' views', *Manchester Guardian*, 19 October 1938, 3

¹⁰⁸ Local notes, *Leominster News*, 11 September 1908, 5

matches involving long journeys. I think all the territories pay a large proportion of the players railway fares and hospitality is always offered for away matches. County funds are very limited, but I know some counties do help their players when fares are heavy.¹⁰⁹

While Armfield obviously did not regard financial constraints as a barrier to league players joining the AEWHA, she did accept that the governing body's insistence on having female-only executive officers was a hurdle – and it was one she was not keen to see lowered. '[It] is a constructive policy,' she wrote. 'Women know their own needs and... the Association has always stressed the educational value to be gained by administrative [sic] work.' Recalling how AEWHA members had 'answered the national call, many of them rendering conspicuous service to their country' during World War One, Armfield added that all these women 'would admit that they were ready and better equipped because of the work they had done for the Association'. While the AEWHA recognised 'the changing needs of the modern hockey player', she said, 'certain principles have proved sound and have laid the foundations of a very fine organisation from which obviously no departure would be contemplated without very strong reasons'.¹¹⁰ Armfield's defence of the 'women only' policy chimed with the one put forward by Light, who – in her letter to the *Manchester Guardian* – wrote that, since its foundation, the AEWHA 'has stood for the organisation of the women's game by women'. She was quick to point out,

¹⁰⁹ Helen G Armfield, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 29 October 1938, 9

¹¹⁰ *ibid*

however, that 'there is no feminist movement in the All England Women's Hockey Association'.¹¹¹

The question of whether 'men are necessary in women's hockey' had also been pondered by Penalty Bully, who – having had experience of associations controlled solely by women and those where men have assisted – had 'no hesitation in casting my vote in favour of "all women".' 'A more understanding atmosphere exists where women are managing their own affairs, especially as it affects their sport,' said the Sheffield-based commentator. 'In short, seeing that it is women who are playing the game, they are certainly most fitted to decide how it shall be conducted.' Penalty Bully added that it was 'rather singular that, in the women's hockey movement, it is only leagues that find it necessary to invoke the aid of men in their affairs of organisation'; the *Manchester Guardian*, meanwhile, described the AEWH's belief that women should manage their own administration as 'an unalterable principle'.¹¹²

The seemingly immutable positions of both governing bodies on cups and male administrators – and confusion among AEWH's members about whether their association offered a truly meritocratic path to the top of the sport – did not augur well for achieving consensus between the sides. Nevertheless, *The Hockey Field* was optimistic that common ground could be found and its editorial encouraged the view that it was in the best interests of the sport to do so. 'If it is possible for the... divergencies in policy to be overcome, or for some

¹¹¹ Light, Women's hockey: 'organising bodies' views', *Manchester Guardian*, 12 October 1938, 3

¹¹² Penalty Bully, In the women's hockey world, *Sheffield Star Green 'un*, 21 November 1936, 6; A Correspondent, Organising bodies' views, *Manchester Guardian*, 5 October 1938, 3

compromise to be reached, the result must surely be to the advantage of the game and its players,' it read, adding:

While the two bodies exist, there will always be a doubt whether the English team can be considered as really representative of the best that hockey can produce, since there must be plenty of talent among the members of the leagues which is so far untapped by the AEWHHA... The leagues are growing year by year – so is the Association, which operates over a larger area and is, of course, the elder and bigger organisation. Nevertheless, it seems somewhat pointless and wasteful to have two organisations dealing with the same game *for the same kind of people* in so small a country as England and... it seems certain that an amalgamation would be an excellent development.¹¹³

This statement shows that women's hockey in England was no longer being considered in binary terms – that is, moneyed, leisured v working women. The editorial was at pains to point out, however, that no official announcement of such a development had yet been made and it was merely considering the possibilities and the difficulties that might be involved. The idea of a merger would not gain traction with the AEWHHA for another four months, during which time the ELHLA continued to expand and began signalling its wider ambition.

Hockey's affinity with other sports

In the opening week of 1939, the *Liverpool Daily Post* reported that the English and Scottish leagues associations and the Northern Ireland Ladies Hockey

¹¹³ Editorial: leagues and the association, *The Hockey Field*, 22 October 1938, 3-4. Emphasis added

Union had come 'into closer relationship by the setting up of an International Leagues Association'.¹¹⁴ The idea was to stage a triangular championship for a 'handsome silver cup' presented by ELHLA president Mrs Arthur Moores – the first trophy, it was claimed, that 'has ever been competed for internationally in this or any other country'.¹¹⁵ Mrs Moores was the sister-in-law of John and Cecil Moores, the driving forces behind the Littlewoods football pools, mail order and high-street retail empire, whose brother Arthur was also involved in the business.¹¹⁶ In addition to being ELHLA president, she was president of the WCA's Northern Counties Association, and in 1937 housed the entire Australia cricket team in her Hightown home when they toured England.¹¹⁷

That same year, Mrs Moores was asked to present medals at the 20th anniversary celebrations of Dick, Kerr Ladies Football Club. The Preston-based engineering company also fielded a side in the ELHLA-affiliated Lancashire Central Women's Hockey League, with many members of the football section said to be 'good cricket and hockey players' too. With her high-profile connections to both of these sports, Mrs Moores was an obvious choice to present gold medals to the Dick, Kerr players – especially as there was no national governing body for women's football at this time, and the FA was not well disposed to the game. She told the gathering that she had always admired the team from afar for the help they had given to deserving causes. She was 'particularly pleased that there was an affinity between girl football, cricket and

¹¹⁴ English association: centralising the leagues, *Liverpool Daily Post*, 4 January 1939, 12

¹¹⁵ Hockey notes, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 20 April 1939, 11. The ELHLA was the inaugural winner, beating both Scotland and Northern Ireland.

¹¹⁶ Catherine Jones and Emma Sherlock, Meet the people who made the football pools a success it is today, *Liverpool Echo*, 23 October 2018 – www.liverpooecho.co.uk/special-features/meet-people-who-made-football-15286136: accessed 15 April 2019

¹¹⁷ Notes on sport of the day: Liverpool hostess, *Liverpool Echo*, 6 May 1937, 14

hockey players', and added that 'she was determined to do all she could to further their interests'.¹¹⁸

Donating the trophy for a triangular international tournament was perhaps Mrs Moores' way of helping to further the interests of hockey, but the new competition had the potential to exacerbate doubts about whether the English team, as selected by the AEWHHA, could be considered truly representative. As a WCA regional president, Moores would have been well known to those AEWHHA members who had founded the cricket association – an organisation that, unsurprisingly, adopted the same stance on male executive officers, cups and competitions as the hockey governing body. It frequently stated that 'there will never be competitive cricket, with points for a win, and a table to slide down or climb up'. As a result, the WCA – like the AEWHHA – failed to attract large numbers of clubs, particularly in the North and Midlands, where women's cricket emulated the men's game, with leagues, knock-out cups and limited-overs games. From 1934, it even had to contend with an alternative governing body: the English Women's Cricket Federation (EWCF).¹¹⁹

Like the ELHLA, the EWCF was primarily run by men and was geographically limited, initially being an amalgamation of the Lancashire and Yorkshire women's cricket federations. It too had national pretensions, though, and considered itself to be a counterpoint to an older (just), more elitist, south-centric organisation. The points of difference between the governing bodies for women's cricket very much echoed those that divided the AEWHHA and the

¹¹⁸ Girl footballers celebrate world championship, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 25 November 1937, 3

¹¹⁹ Threlfall-Sykes, *A history of English women's cricket 1880-1939*, 229

ELHLA. Aside from playing for trophies and having men in positions of authority, the EWCF complained that: affiliation fees to the older governing body were too high; the WCA only catered for middle- and upper-class women; and player-funded tours meant only the wealthiest could hope to be selected for England. The federation's aim was to 'provide organised cricket matches for women, irrespective of class, and with a minimum expense to the players' – and, like the ELHLA, it wished to 'develop friendly relationships between all women's cricket associations'. The primary motivation behind the EWCF, however, was to aid the men's game – a factor not present in the emergence of the ELHLA, probably because women's hockey leagues were the more prevalent and teams were less reliant on men for facilities. In cricket, men's clubs largely agreed to form women's sections under the EWCF because they realised it would give them a financial boost from more membership fees and a greater pool of organisers for vital fundraising events. Women's matches were also only staged in the evening, when pitches weren't required for men's teams, so clubs' revenues could be increased by charging spectators to watch them play. EWCF president F H Timperley admitted that he 'saw no other way for the future success of men's cricket than by fostering the progress of the game among women', while its secretary, Mr Metcalfe, went further. 'The strict policy of the federation is to aid men's cricket,' he declared, 'so favour all and discourage none.'¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Ibid, 233. The reliance of women's cricket on men for access to grounds continued after World War Two: see Raffaella Nicholson, *'Like a man trying to knit?': women's cricket in Britain 1945-2000*, PhD thesis, Queen Mary University of London, July 2015 – https://qmro.qmul.ac.uk/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/12987/Nicholson_Raffaella_PhD_Final_041115.pdf?sequence=1; accessed 15 April 2019

It was the sort of 'exploitation of women' by male officialdom that *The Hockey Field* correspondent 'C E P' had highlighted a few seasons before: women cricket players being used as a 'catch' for gate money.¹²¹ Even so, women such as Mrs Moores – whose administrative work straddled both sports, and who mixed with several AEWhA officers through cricket, if not hockey – demonstrated a relaxed attitude to leagues. Despite the WCA's ban on competitions, Lancashire had among its membership several clubs that played in the Preston & District League, plus the entire Liverpool & District Ladies Cricket League.¹²² Indeed, in 1935, Mrs Moores had presented the inaugural Liverpool & District championship trophy to Port Sunlight LCC, of which she was also president.¹²³ While the threat from the EWCF faded towards the end of the decade, WCA representatives from the north of England helped persuade their organisation that an accommodating approach to leagues was judicious if it really wanted to bring 'all women's cricket under one governing body'. So, in 1938, the WCA changed its rules on competitions to read: 'No member of any county association or club shall institute or take part in any cricket challenge cup or prize competition: exceptions shall be made in favour of schools, colleges and *leagues*'.¹²⁴

How influenced the AEWhA was by the arguments aired and resolved in English women's cricket during the mid-1930s is difficult to say. There were certainly similarities between the sports at this time – most obviously in terms of governance and personnel – but there were also key differences. Unlike in hockey, the WCA was not that much older or more established than the

¹²¹ C E P, Correspondence, *The Hockey Field*, 10 December 1932, 5

¹²² Threlfall-Sykes, *A history of English women's cricket 1880-1939*, 282

¹²³ A champion's smile, *Liverpool Echo*, 26 August 1935, 4

¹²⁴ Threlfall-Sykes, *A history of English women's cricket 1880-1939*, 287. Emphasis added

EWCF, and in some people's eyes had no greater claim to being the national governing body. Northern league cricket sides also routinely defeated their WCA counterparts, so there was more of a question mark over whether the national cricket team was truly representative of the best players in England. The WCA did persuade a few top federation players to defect to it; ahead of Australia's visit in 1937, for example, three West Yorkshire players left the EWCF in the hope of being selected to face the tourists, with Mona Greenwood becoming the first to play for a WCA English XI in June 1936.¹²⁵ The first league hockey player was not named in an AEWHHA representative side until 1939 – and then only at territorial level.¹²⁶ So finding accommodation with leagues was perhaps more important for the credibility of the WCA than it was for the AEWHHA. The main reason the WCA moved to bring leagues within its remit in 1938, however, was that government grants were being made available to sports governing bodies to buy and equip grounds, but only if they could prove they were providing facilities for all classes of people. Marjorie Pollard – the national representative for cricket and hockey on the Women's Team Sports Board, which wished to ensure its members got a fair share of the funding – would have encouraged the WCA and the AEWHHA to think about what they needed to do to achieve this. But there was another event on the horizon for which the hockey governing body wanted to confirm its reach and authority – the fourth IFWHA conference and tournament in Bournemouth.

¹²⁵ *ibid*, 282

¹²⁶ Vice-captain, Women's hockey (notes), *Liverpool Daily Post*, 11 & 18 January 1939, both page 12. This was E Sharples (Strines), of the North of England League, who was selected to play outside-right for the North against North Wales. She retained her place in the team and scored the opening goal in the North's 2-0 win over the East (North's hockey success, *Liverpool Daily Post*, 20 February 1939, 15)

The AEWHHA was due to host this international gathering for the first time since instigating the federation 15 years earlier. Copenhagen (1933) and Philadelphia (1936) had already staged it, and now it was England's turn to welcome players from around the globe for a week-long series of matches, at the end of which no team would be announced the winner and no trophy would be presented. The existence of an alternative governing body for English women's hockey, however, could only serve to confuse visiting nations – especially as the ELHLA had a large, thriving constituency of players, an expanding administrative structure and, now, thanks to Mrs Moores' trophy, an international cup competition in which to participate. The AEWHHA feared its authority could be diminished just as it was preparing to showcase English hockey and its highly efficient, all-female, amateur administration on the world stage. Arguably, it was this, more than any other factor, that focused the minds of the AEWHHA Council on finally addressing the reality of the ELHLA. Within weeks of the International Leagues Association being announced, first tentative steps towards a possible amalgamation were taken, with AEWHHA representatives Sarah Ashworth and K Doman meeting with league officials to discuss 'informally and unofficially' their various points of disagreement. As a result of these talks, the AEWHHA invited the ELHLA – plus delegates from each of its affiliated leagues – to a conference at the Cora Hotel, London, on 19 March 1939.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Competitive hockey, *The Hockey Field*, 25 March 1939, 5

The governing bodies' conference

Commentators on the sport welcomed news of the governing bodies' summit. The *Liverpool Daily Post*'s 'Vice-captain', while stressing 'no significance can be attached to the conference at the moment', wrote: 'This is an excellent gesture by the [AEWHA], which may lead to developments for a greater harmony of working:

League hockey... has wielded an increasing influence during the past 10 years. Its numbers are of big proportions, and there is no doubt... leagues have introduced the game to women who might otherwise never have had the opportunity of handling a hockey stick... It would be pleasing to see these two great sections arriving at some form of agreement. It is no use saying a barrier does not exist at present, not necessarily antagonistic, or even formidable, but definitely a fence that preserves a seclusion which is preventing a wonderful hockey strength being formed in this country.¹²⁸

The *Liverpool Echo*'s G N Osborne, meanwhile, described it as 'a conference without precedent... of vital importance to the whole future of women's hockey, and particularly Liverpool and Lancashire, whose leagues are the biggest in the country'. 'The fact that they are meeting on a common platform,' he added, 'suggests that certain barriers are swept away, and that the path is made smooth for wonderful development. The prospect is arresting.'¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Vice-captain, Women's hockey notes, *Liverpool Daily Post*, 15 March 1939, 12

¹²⁹ G N Osborne, Hockey developments, *Liverpool Echo*, 11 March 1939, 2

It would have been equally arresting to see the women of the AEWHHA and the men of the ELHLA take up their negotiating positions at the Cora Hotel. President Hilda Light led the delegation from the older governing body, which included: Vera Cox (vice-president), Hilda Bothamley (honorary treasurer), Helen Armfield (honorary secretary), Council members Marjorie Pollard and Sarah Ashworth, and Northern Counties executive members Mrs Ridgway and Mrs Mitchell. Representing the ELHLA were Messrs H Barnes (chairman), W B Preston (honorary general secretary), Thomas Hart, and Major Burke of the Umpires Association, while delegates of 12 leagues – Hull, Manchester, Bury, North of England, Leigh, CWS (Manchester), Wigan, Sheffield, Stockport, Liverpool, Lancashire Central and Bolton – were also in attendance.¹³⁰ In her opening remarks, Light assured the meeting that 'there was place and ambit for everyone' within the AEWHHA, and she outlined what it was prepared to do to facilitate a potential merger. Although the association had hitherto held 'as a fundamental principle' that it be controlled exclusively by women, the *Manchester Guardian* reported that the AEWHHA would:

make suggestions to [its] general meeting which would make leagues eligible for membership although those leagues had men as officers on their executives... [and] suggest to [its] members that competitive hockey which entailed the playing for trophies and points should be legal within the AEWHHA, and that this amplification of the AEWHHA's views would not, in the opinion of the council, engender any danger to the game itself.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Hockey notes, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 22 March 1939, 11

¹³¹ Governing bodies' meeting, *Manchester Guardian*, 22 March 1939, 3

If the ELHLA put forward compromises of its own, the newspaper did not report any; indeed, its sub-headline on the conference article – 'All England's concessions to meet league views' – suggests the balance of power at this initial summit lay entirely with the younger organisation. While business was said to have been conducted in 'a spirit of cordial amicability', the opinions put forward by various leagues led to a 'lively discussion' at the Cora Hotel. A basis for further talks was eventually agreed, however, when it was suggested that a 'Leagues' territory be established that would be associated to the AEWHHA but retain its individuality. Each league agreed to take this suggestion back to its own executive, and the *Manchester Guardian* reported that a further conference would probably be held shortly.¹³²

The end of talks

In the meantime, the AEWHHA pressed ahead with its preparations to host the IFWHA tournament in Bournemouth from 14 to 19 October. Wales, Ireland, Scotland, the USA, France, Denmark and South Africa were expected to send teams, as was Australia, whose players had to find all but £10 of the £200 per player that the trip cost. They also had to 'sign an undertaking not to drink cocktails or smoke more than two cigarettes a day'. A grand finals day was scheduled to take place in Beddington Park, near London, on 21 October, followed by a banquet attended by all the players and delegates to the IFWHA conference. The visiting teams would then tour the British Isles for two weeks, playing three matches per week. South Africa were booked to go to the West, South Wales, the Midlands and the East; Australia to the East, the North and

¹³² *ibid*

Scotland; the USA to Ireland and then back to the North of England and the Midlands; and Denmark to the South and the East. 'The public will have ample opportunity of witnessing many interesting matches,' declared the *Sheffield Telegraph*, 'and 1939 will surely be an outstanding year in the women's hockey world.'¹³³

It was not to be, however. With Adolf Hitler's aggressive expansionist policies about to bring international relations across Europe to breaking point, the IFWHA had no choice but to cancel its 1939 event. While it had still been hopeful of staging the tournament in mid-August, by the end of the month cables had been sent to inform teams that it had been called off. On 1 September, Germany invaded Poland and, two days later, Britain was at war again.

Once more, the hockey authorities had to decide whether to continue with their forthcoming seasons, as players up and down the country prepared to sign up to serve their country. The Liverpool Ladies League initially suspended its programme, but later decided to go ahead with its fixtures after consulting its 1,200 members.¹³⁴ The ELHLA also continued throughout the war, staging its annual cup competition and selecting English Leagues teams to play 'Rest of the Leagues' sides.¹³⁵ The AEWHA did not organise county, territorial or national games for the duration of the war, although the WRNS, WAAF and Auxiliary Territorial Service 'produced good representative teams' – bolstered, no doubt, by many AEWHA members. The 'machinery for

¹³³ Margaret Bashforth, Well ahead with plans for women's conference, *Sheffield Telegraph*, 8 March 1939, 10; Bedouin, Searchlight on sport, *Sunderland Echo*, 12 November 1938, 9

¹³⁴ Rangers notes on sport: hockey to start?, *Liverpool Echo*, 12 September 1939, 2

¹³⁵ Sports notes: hockey, *Rochdale Observer*, 4 November 1939, 8; Sports Corner, *Lancashire Daily Post*, 13 March 1946, 4; Women's hockey teams, *Liverpool Daily Post*, 27 March 1941, 6

organisation' was maintained by the governing body, however, and clubs were encouraged to keep playing where possible. The occasional news bulletin was published, and rule books and other hockey literature sold – but, inevitably, many clubs folded as equipment became scarce and expensive, grounds deteriorated, and travel became more difficult.¹³⁶ Talks of a merger with the ELHLA also did not survive the war, and the opportunity that had presented itself in 1939 to unite the two strands of English women's hockey was lost.

¹³⁶ Pollard, *Fifty years of women's hockey*, 45

Conclusion

After World War Two, the All England Women's Hockey Association re-emerged into its 50th anniversary year full of optimism for the future. In an early-season radio broadcast, Midlands president Marjorie Pollard predicted 'a boom in women's hockey' and a chance for youth to shine. 'I don't think that more than two of the players who represented England in the last international before the war will appear in big hockey again,' she said:

Never, therefore, has there been such a chance for young players to climb up the ladder from club, through county and territory, to international hockey. There is no dearth of players. The women's services all produced good representative teams during the war, and we start this season with nearly 700 schools and clubs.¹

Her words hinted at a changing of the guard – of ageing, pre-war pioneers making way for a more meritocratic generation of players and administrators less tightly bound to the AEWH's real or perceived founding principles. The faces at the top of English hockey, however – and the policies they pursued – did not change that much in the immediate post-war period. After 15 years as president, Hilda Light stepped down in 1946 because of ill-health and pressure of work, to be replaced by former president Edith Thompson, who was almost 70 years old.² After a year in office, Thompson gave way for Midlands

¹ Looker-on, Sportsmen's corner: women's hockey jubilee, *Evening Despatch (Birmingham)*, 13 October 1945, 4

² Pollard, *Hilda M Light: her life and times*, 40; Williams, Thompson, Edith Marie (1877-1961), *ODNB*

president and Council member Olga Gimson, aged 62, who said she was 'glad to carry on until the younger generation could get into its stride', but insisted that her stay in office would not be long.³ Consequently, she was succeeded in 1949 by Helen Armfield, who would remain in post until 1957, stepping down one month before her death at the age of 64.⁴ Armfield had been one of the more vociferous pre-war opponents of cups and competitions in hockey, as well as of male influence in women's sport. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that no effort appears to have been made by the AEWHHA to restart talks with the ELHLA. The leagues association was certainly active after the war and, like the AEWHHA, had some familiar faces on its executive committee. Thomas Hart was its vice-chair by 1955, although the presidency had by that time passed to Lady Spurrier, wife of recently knighted president of Leyland Motors Sir Henry Spurrier.⁵

The relationship between the ELHLA and the AEWHHA after 1945 is beyond the scope of this thesis, but, undoubtedly, the immediate priority of both organisations was to rebuild their memberships and restart their domestic programmes. With rationing in force, pitches still requisitioned and travel around Britain very difficult, these tasks would have been hard enough to achieve without also negotiating a merger with another governing body. In addition, the AEWHHA's attention had very quickly returned to international matters. Hoping to pick up where it had left off in 1939, the English association

³ Tomkins & Ward, *The century makers*, 127; New president of the AEWHHA, *Nottingham Evening Post*, 27 June 1947, 6; Olga Gimson (nee Harvey) was born around 1885 (Guy D Gimson messageboard post, Ancestry.com – www.ancestry.com/boards/surnames.gimson/1.1/mb.ashx: accessed 20 April 2019)

⁴ Obituary: H G Armfield, *Birmingham Post*, 6 July 1957, 15

⁵ Henry Spurrier (1898-1964), Grace's Guide to British Industrial History – [www.gracesguide.co.uk/Henry_Spurrier_\(1898-1964\)](http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Henry_Spurrier_(1898-1964)): accessed 20 April 2019

wanted to stage the first post-war IFWHA conference and tournament in 1950, but the continuing social and economic hardships of peacetime Britain made that impossible. Instead, the event went to South Africa, where Hilda Light – having recovered sufficiently good health – took over the IFWHA presidency, signalling the AEWHA's intention to finally host the tournament, in Folkestone in 1953.⁶

In the meantime, the AEWHA's annual end-of-season internationals were also occupying the thoughts of its executive committee. The games had been moved from Merton Abbey to the Oval in 1935, to accommodate increasingly large crowds, but the cricket ground was also proving to be an unsuitable venue. In 1948, spectators reported difficulties in watching the England v Scotland match and, because of congestion, encountered further problems when they tried to leave the ground at the end of the match. So the AEWHA negotiated the use of Wembley Stadium and staged its first match there in 1951, against Ireland in front of 30,000 fans.⁷ It was an occasion 'without precedent at all events in this country and in modern times,' wrote *World Sports* journalist R L Hollands. 'Whenever before has there been a sporting contest staged by women, with women, for women on so great a scale as this international hockey match?'⁸ The national stadium would continue to host these fixtures for the next 40 years, turning the annual 'Wembley

⁶ For an account of the 1953 tournament, see: Jo Halpin, *'The game is the thing': amateurism, the English and the 1953 IFWHA tournament in Folkestone*, unpublished Master's dissertation, De Montfort University, May 2013

⁷ Nan Williams and Christabel Russell-Vick, *The magic of Wembley: women's hockey internationals 1951-1991* (The Hockey Museum, Woking 2018), 6

⁸ R L Hollands, Ladies' Day... at Wembley, *World Sports*, March 1951, 14

international' into a much-anticipated occasion for the players and an exciting day trip for schoolgirls across the country.⁹

It is unclear whether the ELHLA continued its international fixtures after the war. References have been found to its national cup competition starting up again, but not to any post-1945 English leagues trials or fixtures. The likelihood is that the Cora Hotel conference of 1939 was the high-water mark of its influence on English women's hockey, as the governing body remained in existence only until 1960. Then, the English Leagues Cup was donated to the Lancashire Central Women's League and was renamed the John Lishman Cup. It is still competed for today, as is the E S Caley Trophy, which had been awarded by the ELHLA for interleague contests but is now given to the winners of a knock-out competition for Premier and First Division clubs.¹⁰

After the ELHLA folded, many leagues – as they had done before – continued without reference to any governing body. Some, including Lancashire Central, did eventually affiliate to the AEWHHA, but the original governing body was still slow to officially sanction cups and competitions.¹¹ Its first national championship for clubs did not take place until the 1977/78 season, when 10 finalists from county and territorial competitions played in a Tate & Lyle-sponsored tournament in Liverpool. Chelsea College of Physical Education took the title 'amid some chuntering from less fit club players'.¹² The

⁹ Williams and Russell-Vick, *The magic of Wembley*, 6

¹⁰ Dowthwaite, *Lancashire Central Women's Hockey Association 1930-2010*, 102; The 2018/19 winners of the Lishman Cup were Fylde, while Lancashire & Morecambe won the Caley Trophy (Andy Moore, Fylde coast end-of-season hockey review, *Blackpool Gazette*, 10 April 2019, www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/sport/fylde-coast-end-of-season-hockey-review-fylde-ladies-lift-the-lishman-cup-again-1-9703173; Hockey club loses cup final..., *Lancaster Guardian*, 17 April 2019, www.lancasterguardian.co.uk/news/hockey-club-loses-cup-final-but-first-and-second-teams-are-promoted-1-9717768/amp – both accessed: 22 April 2019)

¹¹ Dowthwaite, *Lancashire Central Women's Hockey Association 1930-2010*, 105

¹² Tomkins & Ward, *The century makers*, 189

first AEWHA-sanctioned national league, meanwhile, was not set up until 1989/90, when Slough finished top of the 10-team championship, sponsored by Typhoo.¹³

International women's hockey also continued to be influenced by the English governing body's reticence to embrace competition. The first IFWHA tournament to culminate in a trophy presentation was Edinburgh 1975, when – ironically – England won the championship.¹⁴ Eight years earlier, English players had returned from the IFWHA tournament in Cologne feeling 'depressed and cheated of the glory of being the only undefeated team there'. These feelings were exacerbated by their success not being acknowledged: 'press reporters had to be told long-winded explanations why they were not world champions'. So the players of 1967 wanted the AEWHA to:

come out into the open and say to the other countries that it mattered to them whether or not they won. They wanted to take on anyone, to fight for victory and yet be prepared to lose. Most of all, they wanted a system whereby they knew at the end which was the champion team.¹⁵

They voiced their grievances to Hilda Light, who was still on the AEWHA executive committee and who, in 1964, had been made the first honorary life member of IFWHA. She 'repeated the aims and policies of the Association... and maintained that it was not thought right to play for trophies or titles. The

¹³ Tomkins & Ward, *The century makers*, 218. The other clubs in the inaugural National League were: Leicester (runners-up), Sutton Coldfield, Hightown, Chelmsford, Clifton, Ealing, Orpington, Great Harwood and Exeter

¹⁴ *ibid*, 189

¹⁵ Pollard, *Hilda M Light: her life and times*, 35 & 58

enjoyment of the game, the spirit of sportsmanship in which it was played, the spreading of friendship and goodwill through many otherwise different countries was all-important.' The English players 'thought she was wrong', but the fact that it would be another eight years before the IFWHA changed its policy – and more than 10 years before the AEWHHA sanctioned a domestic trophy competition – indicates that hockey's leadership was still inclined not to listen to its membership.

It was also still holding out against men having any say in the administration of women's hockey. While Light worked hard to foster improved relations with the men's game after World War Two, helping to establish the IFWHA/FIH joint consultative committees and instigating discussions with the HA-led International Hockey Rules Board, 'conservatism and the fear in some women's minds of domination by the men were real obstacles to be overcome'.¹⁶ Efforts by the FIH to get women's hockey recognised by the IOC continued to be frustrated by the existence of the IFWHA, which – in 1950 – again voted, unanimously, against participation in the Olympics.¹⁷ It was not until 1975, at its conference in Edinburgh, that the IFWHA voted (by 56 votes to five) in favour of taking part in the Games, although the AEWHHA did not support an application to the IOC. It believed team games were not suited to the Olympics, that participation would harm the IFWHA tournament and that the Games would be limited to a small number of countries. It also had concerns about how the countries taking part would be chosen.¹⁸ Rather than shaping the discourse on women's hockey, however, the AEWHHA was now

¹⁶ Ibid, 47

¹⁷ IFWHA, *Report of the 4th Triennial Conference*, Johannesburg 1950, UoB Archive B/1/11

¹⁸ Tomkins & Ward, *The century makers*, 182 & 204

swimming against the tide of global opinion. Cooperation between the men's and women's federations on Olympic matters led, inevitably, to a merger of the IFWHA and the FIH in 1982, making Vancouver 1979 the last tournament to be staged solely by the women's federation.¹⁹ The female-only executive of the AEWHHA held out for a little longer; one year after the association's centenary in 1995, it merged with the men's governing body to form the English Hockey Association, now England Hockey.²⁰

Lost opportunities

The AEWHHA was more than 80 years old before it held its first cup competition, and almost 95 before it sanctioned its first league. As this thesis has shown, however, its official position on competitive hockey during the early part of the 20th century was rarely clear-cut, immutable or adhered to by all its members. Indeed, there are three distinct points in its history when women's hockey in England might have taken a very different course.

Before 1900, and contrary to the impression given in the current literature on women's hockey, the governing body was happy for affiliated clubs to play for trophies. Despite adopting most of the men's rules in 1895, it rejected the HA's ban on affiliates instituting or taking part in challenge cups or prize competitions, possibly to fall in line with the Irish Ladies Hockey Union. When the AEWHHA eventually put the issue to its membership three years later, having been offered a cup by *The Ladies' Field* magazine, an amendment to allow clubs to keep playing for the trophies they already had found favour with

¹⁹ Ibid, 179-182. In 1983, a women's tournament was staged in Kuala Lumpur under a joint IFWHA/FIH banner

²⁰ England Hockey, Governance of hockey in England, www.englandhockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=1358§ionTitle=Governance+of+Hockey+in+England – accessed: 20 may 2019

most delegates – just not enough to reach the required two-thirds majority. There was only one vote in it, however, and it is enticing to ponder what might have happened if the balance of power had swung the other way. Would leagues have followed? Possibly. After all, the Irish – who were so instrumental in encouraging the formation of the AEWHHA, and against whom the English played annual internationals – had no qualms about playing in leagues and for cups.²¹ As it was, however, from 1898 AEWHHA affiliates outside of educational institutions were expected to relinquish their silverware, although whether this minority-backed policy was widely adhered to or strictly enforced is impossible to confirm.

The second point at which competitions and trophies might have become recognised realities within the AEWHHA was in 1910, after the emergence of the LHL. Rather than asking its membership to debate and vote on whether such 'pot hunting' organisations should be allowed to affiliate, the AEWHHA Council merely restated its opposition to leagues, and announced that it felt sure members would agree it had acted wisely.²² Given that a majority (albeit not two-thirds) had voted for cups in 1898, however, it is conceivable that such a question – had it been put to the members – might have received a positive response. So, was the AEWHHA executive guarding against something other than the potentially corrupting influence of competition on their sport? While many of the officers were undoubtedly sincere in their belief that the game should be played for its own sake and not for any reward, this thesis contends that their resistance to leagues was

²¹ The Antrim 8 Down LHL was in existence from at least 1898, while the Munster LHL had been formed by 1900 (*Belfast Newsletter*, 4 November 1899, 3; *Cork Examiner*, 14 January 1901, 7)

²² Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 22 December 1910, 147

increasingly concerned with preventing male administrators from being involved in their organisation. The majority of leagues were run by men and admitting such competitions to the AEWHAs ranks would mean allowing them a say in the governance of women's hockey. This was unacceptable to those who ran the AEWHAs, who – from the very start – showed themselves willing to do things differently from their male counterparts.

Sport historians to date have insisted that the AEWHAs female-only stance on governance was purely the consequence of being rejected for affiliation by the HA in 1895. Evidence uncovered for this thesis, however, suggests the women always intended to have full control over their sport, and that any link-up with the men would have been in the form of a federation, rather than a union. This is borne out by the LHA simply asking 'for a representative within the HA'; it also rejected the men's policy on cups and competitions *before* being turned down for affiliation, so was clearly intending to follow its own path on some matters.²³ Indeed, this may have been a contributing factor in the HA's decision to reject the women's request to affiliate. Despite the rebuff, however, no evidence has been found that the early AEWHAs made it official policy to ban men from holding executive office within it or its affiliated associations, as is asserted in much of the current literature. In the same way that the HA, the FA, the RFU and the MCC did not specifically bar women from their key governance positions, the AEWHAs probably considered it unnecessary to be explicit. After all, those involved in the foundation of the women's hockey association were not the sort who would

²³ Minutes of HA committee meeting, 22 November 1895, The Hockey Museum Archive

have regarded rejection by the HA as a major obstacle to their plans, or worth acknowledging with an official policy statement.

As Chapter One has shown by looking in more detail at the initialled individuals listed as the founding members of the AEWHHA, many were among the most prominent and high-achieving women of their generation. They were educationalists, social reformers and philanthropists, whose families were involved in politics, the arts, business and engineering. They were women for whom setting up an organisation, chairing committee meetings and dealing with administration would have held no fear, and for whom self-governance was probably always the preferred option. During the first 15 years of its existence, the AEWHHA happily demonstrated its independence from the HA by modifying not only administrative regulations – such as Rule 12 – to suit its membership, but also by changing the playing rules, including banning the hooking of sticks. Even its definition of an amateur, formulated in 1901, was carefully worded to prevent the men's interpretation of what constituted a professional athlete from being applied to the relatively new female occupation of games mistress. So, by 1910 – when the LHL was formed – members of the AEWHHA Council would have considered there to be even less reason to give men a say in the running of women's hockey. By never asking the wider membership whether leagues should be allowed to affiliate, the possibility of being required to admit male officials was effectively precluded.

Class differences

Whether allowing the LHL to affiliate would have boosted the AEWHHA's membership figures is impossible to say; after all, it may have then lost

members who believed the game should be played for its own sake. The governing body was conscious, however, of the need to retain members and attract new ones, having been forced to run its first recruitment campaign in 1908. It may have feared, therefore, that leagues – with their promise of regular, organised fixtures and the chance of winning silverware – would tempt away affiliates, especially in areas of the country more remote from the influence of the southern-based AEWHHA. Despite the evidence of its own records that affiliates were joining the LHL, the AEWHHA initially portrayed the competition as being for working girls, and emphasised the class differences that, it said, led players to desire points and prizes over the thrill of the game itself. It is an image of leagues that has been repeated in the historical work on hockey to date, although no analysis of the teams and players involved in the LHL or any other competition has been undertaken. This thesis, however, challenges that portrayal.

Through examination of AEWHHA clubs' lists, Chapter Two has shown that teams – including Altrincham St Margaret's and Levenshulme – disaffiliated from the AEWHHA to join the LHL. The governing body also asked several teams to resign after it was discovered they had signed up to play in the competition. It can, therefore, be assumed that players attached to these clubs were of similar social standing to the majority of AEWHHA women at this time – that is, upper middle-class, educated and wealthy. In the same chapter, the biographical analysis of LHL founding member Leigh LHC further undermines the portrayal of pre-1914 leagues as being for working women. It reveals that its players were drawn from among the most influential and well-known families in the town. Their parents were businesspeople, professionals,

politicians and upholders of the law, who involved themselves in the church and charity work. Only one, Pauline Wild, was employed – like numerous AEWHAs as a gymnastics teacher – and at least one had sufficient means to travel overseas. While there is no evidence that Leigh were ever affiliated to the AEWHAs, neither were they a club for 'working girls, shop girls, factory hands, etc', such as the governing body insisted formed the core of the LHL.²⁴ Only after World War One – during which women of all classes came into closer contact with one another through nursing duties, land work and factory jobs – did a more obvious works or welfare dimension to some teams in the LHL emerge (see Appendix B).

By presenting evidence that women from similar backgrounds to those in the AEWHAs were competing in the LHL – and showing, through examination of archive material, that many members of the AEWHAs voted (albeit unsuccessfully) to play for trophies – this thesis challenges the view, prevalent in the work on hockey to date, that the governing body was largely untroubled by the existence of such competitions. The LHL, and the leagues that followed it, undermined the authority of the AEWHAs in a very obvious way – by compromising its claim to represent women's hockey nationally and by exposing the hypocrisy of its policy on cups and competitions; student affiliates were allowed to play for trophies, but club players were not. In trying to maintain this contradictory position, the AEWHAs failed to work out how to embrace all women's hockey in England. In the three decades up to World War Two, its interest in – and attitude towards – leagues ebbed and flowed, largely depending on its own circumstances.

²⁴ Editorial notes, *The Hockey Field*, 6 April 1911, 387

Initially, the AEWHHA chose to watch 'the experiment being made in the north', believing perhaps that the LHL would be a one-season wonder and that the AEWHHA would be strong enough to withstand the loss of a few affiliates.²⁵ After the LHL not only endured, but expanded, however, the governing body changed tack and adopted a more conciliatory stance towards the league – although its aim remained to persuade the 'leaguers' to give up their cups and competitions, and follow the truer sporting path trodden by the AEWHHA. This 'softly softly' approach had minimal effect before the outbreak of World War One and, afterwards, the AEWHHA had to reassess its attitude to competitions again. The social changes wrought by the conflict may have persuaded the governing body that it should try to cater for a broader range of women, but its much-diminished affiliation figures were also a major factor in the AEWHHA allowing leagues to affiliate. Admitting such organisations did not signal the end of its commitment to non-competitive, 'friendly' hockey, however. In fact, having regained its numerical strength in the immediate post-war years, the AEWHHA started to place renewed emphasis on this 'fundamental principle', especially once its attention had turned to creating an international women's hockey federation. The advent of the IFWHA also brought about renewed emphasis on female self-governance in English domestic hockey.

As McCrone points out, there was a 'powerful feminist dimension' to the sport, and this was nowhere more evident than in the relationship between the AEWHHA-led IFWHA and the male-led FIH.²⁶ This is perhaps unsurprising, given that the women's federation was the brainchild of 'ardent suffragette'

²⁵ *ibid*

²⁶ McCrone, *Playing the game*, 137

and 'pioneer of women's rights' Frances Heron-Maxwell, president of the AEWHHA from 1912-22.²⁷ Keeping the IFWHA independent of the already established FIH was just another example of the English association not wishing to cede any control over women's hockey to men. They had governed themselves successfully for almost 30 years, given decorated service to their country during World War One, and played an active role in securing partial women's suffrage in 1918 – so why would they not govern their own sporting activities? When the IFWHA became a reality in 1927, only nations whose hockey associations were run solely by women were eligible for membership. The federation also adopted the English amateur ideals of not organising championships or playing for trophies, and – unlike the FIH – showed no desire to seek entry into the Olympic Games. By the mid-1920s, therefore, the AEWHHA was leading and championing a non-competitive, international organisation – run exclusively by women, for women – while itself counting several male-run leagues among its affiliates. As a result, this thesis contends, the English governing body began placing more and more restrictions on its league members, including giving them two years to replace male honorary secretaries with women. Again, leagues began to feel that the AEWHHA had little to offer them, and several resigned their membership, later to form an alternative governing body: the ELHLA.

The academic literature on hockey to date makes no mention of a second women's governing body in England, so this thesis offers the first account of the foundation and early development of the ELHLA. Although geographically limited, it espoused national ambitions, and became sufficiently

²⁷ Turner, *Down memory lane*, 14 & 135

influential within seven years of its formation to be invited by the AEWHHA to discuss a merger. This was the third and final occasion before World War Two when English women's hockey might have embraced leagues and cups – and accepted men in positions of authority within the sport. Discussions between the AEWHHA and the ELHLA never really got off the ground, however; the first meeting took place right at the end of the 1938/39 season – in mid-March – and concluded with both sides agreeing to go back to their respective organisations to canvas opinion about what had been proposed. These all-association meetings would probably have been scheduled for the start of the following season, given that most clubs and leagues would have been winding down for the summer. By September, however, the world was at war again, and this moment of mutuality between the two associations representing women's hockey in England did not re-emerge after six years of global conflict.

As outlined in Chapter Four, however, the AEWHHA had been more inclined to give ground to the leagues over playing for points and prizes than it had been over male administrators. This suggests its adherence to a policy of non-competitive sport was as much – if not more – to do with keeping women's hockey under the sole control of women than it was with keeping the game free of potentially corrupting commercial influences. It is, arguably, a position the AEWHHA maintained for much of the second half of the 20th century, too.

Suggestions for further research

One of the main aims of this thesis was to supplement and further develop the very sparse body of academic work on hockey, and on women's hockey in

particular. While focusing on a very particular aspect of the women's game – leagues and their impact on the governance of the sport in England – the scope of previously published has been extended. The history of women's, men's and mixed hockey remains a very under-researched topic, however, and several areas of further study have presented themselves in the course of researching and writing this PhD.

For much of the 20th century, hockey occupied the unique position in England of being a team sport that was accepted by wider society as being equally suited to women and men, and which was popular with both sexes. As a result of the HA refusing to recognise the AEWH in 1895, however, the game did not acquire a unified governing body until the mid-1990s. Historians, therefore, have a rare opportunity to investigate the differing approaches to governance adopted by men and women for the same sport over the course of almost an entire century.

The impact of this early division of the sexes on hockey's development – and the relationship between the governing bodies before 1939 – have been touched upon in this thesis, which has shown there were close, often familial, ties between the women's and men's games. It has also illustrated how the women frequently led the way, both on and off the pitch. They modified the rules to improve the game for players and spectators alike; used new technology – such as cine-film, radio and television – to raise the profile of the sport and to improve the standard of play through coaching; and they were far more active than the HA in promoting hockey overseas, via tours and their lead role in the international federation. The frequently fractious relationship between the IFWHA and the FIH has also been referred to briefly, but the

convergence and divergence of women's and men's hockey throughout the 20th century – nationally and internationally – deserves its own study.

Likewise, in-depth histories of the AEWH, the HA, the IFWH and the FIH are all still waiting to be written, as is the history of the Irish Ladies' Hockey Union – the first female-run sport governing body.

Chapter One has extended the scope of previously published work on the AEWH by looking more closely at its origins and the women who brought it into being. But there is far more to be discovered, and a comprehensive, academic history of the organisation – from 1895-1996 – still needs to be written. The biographical details unearthed about Newnham's touring team to Dublin, as well as of leading figures in the English and Irish associations, show that some of the most prominent women of their generation were involved in playing or administering hockey. Giving names and identities to previously only initialled individuals was a time-consuming process, however, and the variable results are but the tip of a very large iceberg. The reward has been in confirming the centrality of sport to the lives of many women who were – or would become – prominent in other fields, including science, education, politics, social work, medicine, the arts and industry. While this thesis has outlined many interconnections between hockey and female advancement in the broader public sphere, its importance in creating and sustaining wider networks and friendship groups among players warrants much more research.

This thesis has also made extensive use of the AEWH archive at the University of Bath to highlight some of the administrative mechanics of running a national sports governing body – uniquely, a female-run sports governing body. Minutes of committee, subcommittee, Council and AGM meetings can

be dense, confusing and sometimes contradictory documents, but they shine a light on the decision-making processes of an organisation. In terms of this thesis, the AEWHHA records have revealed a body in which every decision – be it about playing for cups, courting publicity or forming county associations – was contested, sometimes fiercely. The association and its membership have also emerged from the archive as being more nuanced than they are often portrayed in the historical literature to date. Necessarily, this thesis has looked at a very narrowly defined area of women's hockey in England, but there is plenty more information – on any number of topics – to be mined from the documents in Bath and at The Hockey Museum in Woking.

This includes biographical information, and several of the AEWHHA women featured in this thesis are good candidates for further study: Lilian Faithfull, Edith Thompson, Hilda Light, Marjorie Pollard and Frances Heron-Maxwell – the outspoken, masculine-looking women's rights and suffrage campaigner, who stands out as one of the more colourful and interesting characters to have led the association. Aside from their sporting achievements, all of these women were involved in national social, political and educational organisations, and many were awarded honours for their service during World War One. This, of itself, is a topic that would reward further research: hockey's contribution to the war effort – both 1914-18 and 1939-45. From the players who died at the Front, to those who served in government departments, as nurses, land girls and munitions workers, there are histories waiting to be told. The sport itself also appears to have been played quite frequently behind the frontlines during World War One, as a means of recreation for the nurses and soldiers.

Hockey players, as this thesis has started to show, were also very involved in the fight for women's suffrage in the UK. Before becoming president of the AEWHA, Heron-Maxwell was involved with the radical Women's Emancipation Union, set up by Elizabeth Wolstenholme Emly, and later joined the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage. Intriguingly, her prominent involvement with hockey from 1908 coincided with the time when she, Eva McLaren and Marie Corbett formed the Forward Suffrage Union (FSU), to strengthen and concentrate the efforts of the Women's Liberal Federation in securing the vote. More research is needed to discover whether the FSU viewed the AEWHA as a vehicle through which to engage large numbers of intelligent, organised women in the suffrage cause.

Clara Rackham, who captained the University of Cambridge team and played for Bocking, in Essex, was also a prominent suffragist, working as Millicent Fawcett's 'right-hand woman' in the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. Crouch End player Mary Hankinson, meanwhile, was a member of the more militant Women's Freedom League and later president of the Gymnastic Teachers' Suffrage Society. She is another AEWHA member whose life story would make for a fascinating biography, given also her involvement in the socialist Fabian Society and close friendships with the likes of George Bernard Shaw.

In addition to national political movements, hockey players – including Faithfull, Thompson, Susan Smee, Hope Cozens-Hardy and Clara Rackham – were among the first women in the UK to be elected to local councils and appointed as JPs. Many also acted as school board and care committee members, sanitary and factory inspectors, and Poor Law Guardians in

workhouses, so the impact of hockey players on British public life and social welfare is another area of potentially fruitful research.

Creating a history

This thesis has focused on an aspect of women's hockey in England that has not been researched to any great extent before – the emergence of leagues in the early 20th century and the impact of these on the sport's governance up to the start of World War Two. In doing so, it has not only uncovered new information about the foundation of the AEWHHA and its early development, but also revealed the existence of a second governing body for women's hockey in England – the ELHLA.

By documenting the AEWHHA's struggle to accommodate leagues – because of its insistence that its affiliates play only for the love of the game, not for cups and in competitions – this thesis has also brought a fresh perspective to the topic of amateurism. Until recently, historians have largely ignored the way in which this philosophy might have impacted upon, or been perceived by, women in sport, particularly those who played team games.²⁸ The AEWHHA's unique position as the first women-run sport governing body in England, however, has provided an opportunity for this thesis to redress the balance slightly, and offer a female-centric view of amateurism. It has shown that, like many sports organisations, the AEWHHA struggled to define its amateur ideals. Unlike many sports organisations, however, this thesis contends that its adherence to non-competitive play was less to do with

²⁸ Halpin, 'Thus far and no farther', 146-163

keeping out the working classes than keeping men from having a say in the governance of their sport.

A wealth of new biographical detail about the women involved in both the AEWH and the leagues has also been included in this work, as has new detail about their involvement in World War One and the suffrage movement. As outlined above, however, there is plenty of scope for further research and it is hoped that this thesis can be a stepping-stone to further studies, so that, happily, hockey may no longer be without a history.

Appendix A: Inaugural AEWHA and ELHLA representative teams



First AEWHA team, 1896: (l-r) back row – Emily Tatham, Miss Brook, A. Carver, Miss Bouchier, J. Retallack; seated – Winifred May Langridge, Emily Godschall Johnson, Mary D'Oyley, Miss Andrews; front row – Ethel Mary Robson, M. Mellor

Source: HockeyGods, hockeygods.com/images/12421-England_Women_s_National_Field_Hockey_Team_1896 - accessed: 9 November 2015



First ELHLA team 1933. Included: D Brayshaw, M Cavanagh, E Hawkins, M Hegg, A Herbert, F Honour, M Hyde, M Mason, J Passmore, Edith Rowcroft, E Schofield. The picture was taken at Preston rail station on the team's return from beating Scotland 2-1. The male officials have not been identified.

Sources: *Lancashire Daily Post*, 23 February 1933, 11; 7 March 1933, 9

Appendix B: Evolution of the Lancashire and Cheshire Ladies Hockey League / North of England League

When the LHL was formed in 1910, its two divisions consisted of teams with no obvious connections to works or welfare organisations. This situation began to change after World War One, when sides – such as Pioneer, Westinghouse and the Manchester Girls' Institute – took their places alongside founding clubs such as Altrincham St Margaret's, Clarendon and Gorton. When the ELHLA was formed in 1932/33, the LHL opted to stay within the AEWH and was renamed the North of England League. Boasting seven divisions, its teams were a mix of founding members, works, welfare and church-affiliated clubs.

1910/11:¹

Division One:

Altrincham St
Margaret's
Ashton
Clarendon
Clifton
Leigh
Levenshulme
Oldham
Saddleworth
Urmston Ladies
Withington

Division Two:

Ashton A
Clifton A
Coldhurst
Dukinfield
Gorton
Holyrood
Leigh A
Levenshulme A
Oldham A
Withington A

1919/20:²

Division One:

Alma
Altrincham St
Margaret's
Broughton
MDTCPS
Oldham
Pendleton
Radcliffe
Rochdale
Saddleworth
Swinton Park
Tyldesley
Urmston Ladies

Division Two:

Alma A
Broughton A
Clarendon
Delph
Eccles
Gorton
Hollinwood
Levenshulme St A
Pioneer
Saddleworth A
Urmston Ladies A
Westinghouse
Withington

Division Three:

Anson
Eccles A
Eccles Wesleyan
Hollinwood A
Manc'r Girls' Institute
MDTCPS A
Middleton
Sale
Sale St Anne's
Tyldesley A

¹ Inaugural season of the Lancashire & Cheshire LHL

² First post-war season and one year before leagues were admitted to the AEWH

1932/33:³**Division One:**

Belgrave
 Broughton
Clarendon
 Eccles Wesleyans
 Ellesmere
 Hyde
 Nth Manchester
 Sth Manchester
 Urmston
 Waterloo

Division Two:

Anson
 Ashton Brothers
 Charlestown
 CWS
 Eccles
 Hale
 Hollinwood
 New Moston
 Old Essians
 Simpson & Godlee

Division Three:

Ashton-under-Lyne
 Monton
 Newton Mills
Oldham
 St Cross
 Urmston A
 Waterloo A
Withington

Division Four:

Clarendon A
 Flixton
 Gardners Engines
 Greenfield
 Magnet
 MMDT
 Old Waconians
 Rochdale A
 Trafford
 Victoria

Division Five:

Academicals
 Anson A
 Charlestown A
 Greengate
 Hollinwood A
 Hyde A
 M'chester Ship Canal
 Sth Manchester A
 Strines A
 Tootals

Division Six:

Austin
 Delph A
 Eccles A
 Glover's
 JCM
 Old Essians A
 Oldham A
 Old Standians
 SMBP
 Waterloo B

Division Seven:

Ashton-u-Lyne A
 CWS A
 Heywood
 Manc'r Comptomitors
 Moss Side U
 Rigby & Wood
 Sale Moor A
 Tootals A
 Tootals W A
 Withington A

³ Season in which the ELHLA was established. The North of England League remained within the AEWH. NB: Two teams are missing from Division Three – details have yet to be established. (Hockey: Women's League, *Manchester Guardian*, 22 February 1933, 4)

Appendix C: Leigh LHC – inaugural LHL champions 1910/11



This is the 1909/10 Leigh team. Members of the championship winning team not pictured include Evelyn Prestwich and Annie Grundy

1910/11: final table

Ladies' Hockey League.									
First Division.									
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	PS.		
Leigh	18	15	1	2	86	18	32		
St. M'garets 15	12	2	1	1	64	22	25		
Levensh'me 14	10	1	3	49	17	23			
Saddlewo'th 16	10	5	1	46	16	21			
Urmston.....	17	8	7	2	44	27	18		
Ashton.....	16	7	7	2	49	42	16		
Oldham.....	16	6	10	0	36	59	12		
Clarendon....	17	5	11	1	27	44	11		
Clifton	17	2	15	0	18	65	4		
Withington..	16	0	16	0	7	117	0		

Sources: *Leigh Chronicle*, 17 March 1911, 7; 22 April 1910, 7

Appendix D: Leagues in England before 1939

I have become aware of the following leagues during the course of my research. While many were members of the ELHLA or the AEWHHA, many others did not affiliate to any governing body, so this is by no means an exhaustive list of the competitions in existence before World War Two.

Women's leagues

Birmingham Girls

Bolton

Bradford

Business House

Civil Service

Fylde

Hull & District

Inter-Varsity

Lancashire Central

Lancashire & Cheshire

Leeds

Leicester & Leicestershire

Leigh

Leyland & District

Liverpool

Liverpool Union of Girls' Clubs

London Women's Training College

Manchester

Manchester & Dis Sunday Schools

Middleton

Northampton Leather Trades

North of England

Sheffield & District

Sheffield Hospitals

Stockport

Tyneside

Wigan & District

Mixed leagues

Leicestershire

Nottinghamshire

Tyneside

West Riding

Appendix E: Chronology of amateurism and governance in the LHA/AEWHHA and IFWHA 1895-1996

1895: Ladies' Hockey Association (LHA) – later known as the All England Women's Hockey Association (AEWHA) – is founded. LHA rejects Rule 12 of the Hockey Association (HA), which states: *'No affiliated association, and no club belonging to the Hockey Association, and no player or member of any such club shall institute or take part in any hockey challenge cup or prize competition.'*

1898: AEWHA introduces rule that: *'No affiliated association and no club belonging to the AEWHA or to any affiliated association shall institute or take part in any hockey challenge cup or prize competition... exception shall be made in favour of university, college, school and house cups.'* A fifth exception in favour of *'all cups which at the time of passing this rule are in possession of clubs'* is voted for by seven delegates to five – but not passed because it does not attract a two-thirds majority.

1901: AEWHA defines *'amateur'* as *'one who does not play for money'*.

1910: Lancashire and Cheshire Ladies Hockey League (LHL) formed.

1920: LHL allowed to affiliate to the AEWHA, followed in subsequent seasons by other leagues.

1926: AEWHHA amends its rules to state that *leagues affiliated before May 1926 can continue playing for cups and trophies, but future league affiliates are barred from doing so*. It also gives affiliated clubs and associations two years to replace male honorary secretaries with women.

1927: International Federation of Women's Hockey Associations (IFWHA) is established, largely through the efforts of the AEWHHA.

1931: AEWHHA votes to *allow leagues to play for cups in 'certain controlled circumstances', regardless of when they affiliated*. They can continue to play for the trophies they have, but not accept new ones.

1932: English Ladies Hockey Leagues Association (ELHLA) set up as an alternative to the AEWHHA.

1936: IFWHA votes *against lobbying for inclusion in the Olympic Games*, stating that 'the competitive spirit which is fostered [by the Olympics] and the time of the year at which Games take place make it undesirable for women hockey players to take part'.

1939: Ahead of merger talks with the ELHLA, the AEWHHA indicates that it is prepared to make playing for trophies and points legal within the AEWHHA. It also says it is prepared to make leagues eligible for membership even if they have men as executive officers.

1950: The IFWHA votes unanimously against participation in the Olympic Games.

1951: First women's international is staged at Wembley Stadium – England beat Ireland 6-1

1960: ELHLA disbands.

1975: Teams at the IFWHA tournament in Edinburgh compete for a trophy for the first time. England win. At the accompanying conference, the IFWHA votes by 56 votes to five in favour of taking part in the Olympic Games; the AEWHHA does not support its application to the IOC. A joint FIH/IFWHA Supreme Council is established to assume responsibility for world and Olympic hockey.

1977: The AEWHHA stages its first national clubs championship, sponsored by Tate & Lyle and won by Chelsea College of Physical Education.

1979: The last IFWHA-only tournament takes place in Vancouver, Canada.

1980: Boycott of Moscow Games means GB cannot take part in the inaugural Olympic women's hockey tournament. Zimbabwe win the gold medal.

1982: The IFWHA and FIH merge; the joint organisation is known as the FIH.

1983: A joint IFWHA-FIH women's world championship is staged in Kuala Lumpur – the last tournament under an IFWHA banner.

1988: GB women make their Olympic debut in Seoul, South Korea.

1989: The AEWHA launches a 10-team national league, sponsored by Typhoo. Slough are the inaugural winners.

1995: The AEWHA celebrates its centenary.

1996: The AEWHA and the HA merge to form the English Hockey Association (now England Hockey).

Appendix F: Amateurism/professionalism in verse

Readers of *The Hockey Field* were apt to express their opinions, on any number of subjects, through the medium of poetry. The following are examples of the work submitted about cups, competitions and professionalism between 1910 and 1939.

Will you walk into our parlour?

'Will you walk into our parlour?' say the Leagues to the 'A'.*
'Twill be so very good for you, we've lots of subs to pay.
We'll give you charming prizes – chaste urns of shining gold,
And we will ask you nothing but to be by us controlled?'

'No thank you, oh, by no means,' the smiling 'A' replies.
'To accept your invitation we think would be unwise.
We'd rather keep our freedom, our pleasant games to play.
For golden cups 'tis possible [sic] too big a price to pay.'

Anon

The Hockey Field, 9 February 1911, 260. *AEWHA

To a professional coach whose advertisement sets forth her hockey achievements

Advertiser, when I read I bowed before your hockey fame,
But disconsolately pondered on the prospects of the game.
For I looked into the future, thirty years or so ahead;
Saw it gone the way of soccer, as a game completely dead.
Heard the thousands of spectators who had never held a stick
Betting on a cup-tie final, cheering till they made me sick.
Saw a company's prospectus, all the profits up to date,
Roseate visions of the future, estimates of every gate.

Saw the balance sheet they issued, all the sums received and spent,
Liabilities and assets, dividend of ten per cent.

'Oh!' you say, 'you're talking nonsense; we are not a bit like that.

Hockey clubs be run for profit! No; I contradict you flat.'

'Though I make my living by it, yet I truly love the game;

Also, I'm an individual, so it isn't quite the same.'

Simple minded! Mass is but the sum of what it has within.

Can the lump be solid silver if the particles are tin?

And if you, and you, are traders, out not wholly for the game,

But with aims in part financial, then the club will be the same.

'But I've got to earn my living!' the professional exclaims.

Yes, I know; and so do others. Must you do it by your games?

'But I really love the game, so why make such an awful song?'

Truly, fully, I believe you. No; it isn't that that's wrong.

But you're thoughtless; don't you see that this and other things you do

Have the values that you give them? Are your hockey values true?

If you use your hockey laurels to enhance your business name,

Surely, then, outright you sell them: you can't keep them just the same.

Either take the cash they bring you, or the place you win by play.

Oil and water will not mix, but you can have it either way.

From the team you oust that other; she's a job she cannot shirk:

Hockey is *her* recreation; you have made it *your* life's work.

'Both are amateurs,' you tell me. Are you? Are you quite the same?

Can't you, won't you, try to see it just because you love the game?

Anon

The Hockey Field, 7 January 1928, 9. Author's emphasis.

Alas! My Poor Sister!**Lines on the formation of the English Women's Hockey League Association****I**

There has long been an intrigue
To split off and form a league
That can play for 'pots' and trophies as they please
But I think it is a pity
So I write this little ditty
Though I don't suppose that everyone agrees.

II

Now the fiat has gone forth
And a portion of the North
Blindly follows where the football people led,
And they want a silver cup
So they've thrown All England up.
Who are these 'rush in where angels fear to tread'?

III

The All England pioneers
Bravely fought for many years,
Hobble skirts and Mrs Grundy – beat them too.
Now, your poor old 'Alma Mater'
Is a very small pertater,
So a latch key, and no apron strings for you!

IV

When the game was first begun,
It was simply played for fun,
There was nothing but a 'friendly' match to play,
And in all our Island story
'Twas for honour and for glory,
And it's sad to see it go the other way.

V

In the future shall we see

(Clad in shorts above the knee)

Brawny women bought and sold? – I mean 'transferred'

If you're paid to play a game,

It can never be the same.

Than 'professional' I know no sadder word.

VI

When the bands of 'gates' have bound you

And league jealousies surround you

And your game becomes a business, you will see;

You – from villa, grange or cottage,

Who preferred a sense of pottage,

And for that have sold the birthright of the free!

A G Stanley

The Hockey Field, 15 October, 1932, 3

Couplets

ULAU's given up

Playing for a silly cup.

AEWHA said 'We do not like cup play.

No new league shall with us sup

If it still supports a cup.

This we say to all our "pups"

Children! Do not play for cups.

Cups should really be taboo

But – we leave the rest to you.

Civil Service led the way.

For a cup they *never* play.

Business House followed suit,

Cups are now forbidden fruit.

ULAU's given up
Playing for a silly cup.
Best congratulations! May you
Always flourish, ULAU!

A G S (More or less 'in her cups')

The Hockey Field, 10 March 1934, 3. A reaction to the news that the University of London Athletic Union had given up playing for trophies. Author's emphasis.

Competitive hockey?

The Southern Counties do not care
To have a championship, nor where
Each county comes upon the list.
In fact they have no list at all,
Such childish interests merely pall
And add no pang to goals they've missed.

When Middlesex and Sussex meet
They do not enviously compete
Or strive to win the topmost place.
Hampshire and Surrey are not spurred
By hopes of second place or third
When on the field they're face to face.

Oh! North and Midlands, East and West,
Why do you find an added zest
In trying to come out 'on top'?
Your views on sport are much mistaken,
A higher soul you must awaken,
Championships are now 'de trop'.

The Southern soul we must admit,
Is made of finer composite,
And lower motives hold no sway.
All you can do, you baser flocks,
Is just to give the Southernns socks,
And help them on their upward way.

M A Pyke

The Hockey Field, 25 January 1936, 9. This was a response to an article (*The Hockey Field*, 18 January 1936) about the Southern tournament not being run on championship lines.

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Cambridge Independent Press
Cork Examiner
Daily Commercial News and Shipping List
Daily Herald (Adelaide, Australia)
Daily Mirror
Daily News
Dover Express
Dublin Evening Mail
Dundee Courier
Dundee Evening Telegraph
Ealing News Extra
Essex County Chronicle
Evening Despatch (Birmingham)
Evening Herald (Dublin)
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Hampshire Advertiser
Hull Daily Mail
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Kent and Sussex Courier
Kentish Independent
Lancashire Daily Post
Leamington, Warwick and District Daily Circular
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Leeds Times
Leigh Chronicle
Leominster News
Lincolnshire Echo
London Daily News
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Sheffield Independent
Sheffield Star Green 'un
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Sydney Morning Herald
The Bystander
The Citizen (Northamptonshire)
The Globe
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The Observer
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